Encounter

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Intellectuals

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Robert Nisbet

The History Lesson
Golo Mann

Sergei Nechayev (II)
Michael Bakunin

Gurus Galore
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(a story)
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TWO VIEWS OF AMERICA'S WORLD ROLE

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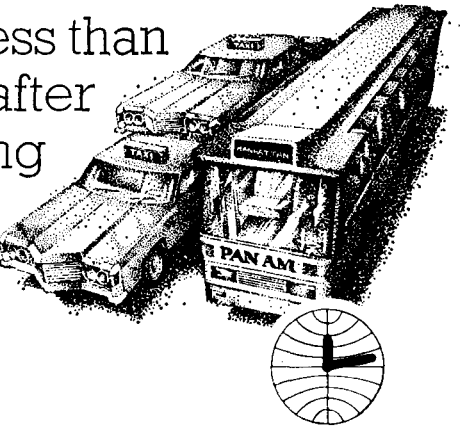

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Encounter

AUGUST 1972

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William Sansom

The Day The Lift...

A SUDDEN SENSE of urgency in the empty office vestibule, clip-clop of feet hurrying, and round the dusty green-painted corner came trotting a tubby young middle-aged man. Up and down went the feet, not at a run but more as a deference to punctuality —he could have walked as fast to the lift gates in the time.

Who knew—somebody floors above might in the next second press the bell, summoning the lift on its slow ascent upwards: and then a long wait, as whoever it was had a last-minute chat, keeping the lift door open and neutralised. There might even be some tedious porter or clerk ready to load in cartons. Cartons! His legs pranced up higher—but when he got to the black grill of gates the lift was not there at all.

A. B. Bowlsend black-lettered on his brown briefcase, Arnold Brinsley Bowlsend in his mind, pressed the brass bell and listened up the shaft. Not a sound. He quietly cursed and flicked out his wristwatch, a fine commuter's platform flick. But no—his train was not late. Nicely on time. Only that maniac above with the cartons could upset things. Though there was nothing much to upset—his appointment up shaft was of only routine importance: nothing could be upset but conceptions of order and punctuality, which A. B. Bowlsend of 12 Kelmscott Rise, Thotham, Middx, valued and clung to. Bowlsend's life was nicely ordered. He had his wife, two big Bowlsend daughters, his house, car and garden. He had a milieu, he had a street round the corner with a red postal box, another street with a bus-stop, and another close by with older trees to make a pleasant walk. Settled. Under-an-hour to his office. It was a settled state which he was indeed pleased to conserve, and this could first be done by attending to matters which were within practical reach like punctuality—the Lord alone could take care of all those financial and military dangers looming in a limbo of newsprint, they were ever-present but also ever-distant; he himself, a voter, democratically a force in the big world ha ha, could do little about waxing bombs, waning savings. He could, though, be certain about mending a garden fence, warning his sixteen-year-old Marlene on the putative perils of promiscuous youth, and getting up the lift-shaft. He attended to those things he could, he cultivated his garden. Others, the jet lot in their bullet-shaped cars, puffing away at pot and swigging champagne, could scoff at the suburban life: but a greater man than they, Voltaire himself, had commended the garden. Bowlsend, not yet forty, fit as a fiddle and fairly provident, was happy to stay by this advice.

GOOD THAT THE lift bell was brass, and had plainly been polished that very day: bright, in fact, as a button. The only light of efficiency in this grimy vestibule with its greyed classic cornices, its green institutional paint, its furnitureless invitation to dust and dirt. The bell would have been cleaned by a janitor, and thus the lift itself would be supervised—had it been out of order, a notice must have said so. Bowlsend knew it to be an old-fashioned kind of lift, and somehow the more trustworthy for this: you were not shut up blind with rubbery air noises in this solid, stately, iron-grilled affair.

He leaned forward and pressed the button again. In doing so, his face leaned closer to the open-grill gates, and the great, oily, black ground-machinery of the lift came intimately into view. Furred with dust like thick soot, darkly greased, all set down in a pit like something lying beneath a railway platform. Heavy stuff, he was glad to see. Reliable. But it was terribly dirty, there must be years of this dust blackened by oil and grease—and somehow bits of paper and cigarette cartons had been thrown there. Imagine flipping a cigarette pack through the gates! Some

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litter-lout's annoyance at being kept waiting, Bowlsend supposed. But even then a janitor should have cleaned it up? Perhaps it was even the janitor's own mess? So he was not such an efficient man after all? Had his lapses?

However, there was not much wrong with an odd bit of paper. Though Bowlsend was not so sure about plastics. A plastic carton of some kind was a lasting matter. Tough, durable—a crumpled sliver could thoroughly gum up the works? Say, fly in between the steel hawsers and the wheel flange, throttle it? His mind went back to a southern beach, to the picturesque Italian peasant women carrying their picturesque washing down to the picturesque fresh spring water under the cliff, and the whole mile-long curve of beach beyond them bobbing with an infrangible bright yellow band of picturesque detergent bottles. Bottles one, two years old—even the great salt sea, which eats iron, could not destroy them.

Still, he thought, where the thing actually worked was clean and bright—the wheel-flange glinted its rubbed silver, the hawsers were rustless and greased, though surely a little too thin, or frail, to take such a weight? Bowlsend muttered the reassuring word "tensile," and averted his eyes.

"LOVER-BOY," his wife Samantha had said last night, "looks real, real cool," as they changed for dinner.

Which, he had suddenly thought, was a real square echo of a string-of-pearls lady complimenting her husband's cool dinner jacket. But Samantha meant cool in an up-to-the-minute sense, for the Bowlsends religiously changed for dinner each night not into evening clothes but into fashionable casual garments of many colours. Like a thousand others, he put off his office suit and she her housewifely shopping frock to emerge like butterflies in the latest loungerie as pictured in coloured magazines. Emerged, they sat about with glasses of some up-to-the-minute concoction—a mint shandy, vermouth punch—and admired each other, and felt secure in this the unconventional which had become a convention.

"Square," he had suddenly said last night, "we've come full circle, we're square," thinking of dinner jackets and evening gowns.

He had tried to explain, but neither his wife nor two galumphing daughters—also arrayed in fanciful garments—had been able to understand.

"But can't you see, Sammie, that those cool, cool trouserings of yours are in fact a long, chenille, beige, off-the-shoulder, cut-on-the-cross, low-backed gown? And that the exquisitely extraordinary thing round your neck is a necklace of pearls?"

"No," Samantha had said.

As if he were mad. And those daughters, their big pale lips revolving gum like cows at the cud, had glowered contempt.

Christ, he had thought, I've got three bloody wives to keep. Three sets of lipsticks, eye-shadow, panties, tights, bras and all the fearful rest. Quite a harem. Every week their sanitary arrangements alone cost him as much as a week's tobacco—but here he caught himself, they were his wife and children, his nearest and dearest, and more than that, the outward and visible sign of the very inner settled state he prized.

AT LAST a thrash of gates above! The hawsers moved into action, the lift itself could be heard droning and rattling down.

The first sign of it was a long loop of wire, terribly loose-looking against the bare concrete shaft-wall—where would it go to underneath, was there room for it to coil, what *was* it anyway?—and then the descending floor, and feet, and trousers, and two staring zoo-faces at the grill. Rattling and pulling of catches and doors. No good saying "Got all day?" to them, it might provoke an incident, delay things further—so he just glared an extra cold "Thank you" to the man who held the door open, and left it to clang automatically behind him.

But it did not. Bowlsend looked round at the irritating apparatus—sometimes they closed themselves, sometimes not, you never knew—but found another man on quiet feet had arrived to share the lift with him, and was holding the door.

A quick appraisal, as Bowlsend made room for him. Man of about his own age, blue suit, stripes too loud, briefcase, no hat, glasses—he looked again, greyish glasses concealing eyes, the man looked asleep.

"Floor?" asked Bowlsend, in charge of buttons.

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"Top," the man said, "Five."

"I'm four," Bowlsend said, pressing the button, adding affably: "Not quite so ambitious."

The man smiled with his mouth, but the grey-glassed eyes remained hooded: was this perhaps a cynical smile, marking him one down for facetiousness? Defences arose, as the lift gave a shudder and began the upwards pull.

They stood together at attention, upright as men together in a urinal. Their eyes down at their feet for the first second: then rising to briefcase level and up as far as the chest, when quickly they switched to avoid each other's eyes—a meeting of eyes in such an intimate mahogany box might compel speech. Speech was unthinkable, the journey too short: the exchange of "Nice afternoon again" too obvious a nervous discharge. Besides, there was much to digest: from Bowlsend's instant survey, the man's bottom waistcoat button was done up, and his lapel winked a pinpoint red rosette—foreigner, perhaps? Extraordinary the impact of presence, even in such a short routine journey—invisible ectoplasms, waves of electric personality jetting everywhere. At least the man's glasses helped—you could not imagine being observed too closely through those occlusive lenses.

IN ANY CASE, there was plenty to read. *Authorised Load Four Persons.* And the name of the maker of the lift embossed in rich-looking metal. And now—as their box encountered the first floor, a huge figure 1 painted on the concrete. Brief glimpse of an empty passageway through the grill, and they were hauled up and past like a very slow express train superior to unimportant stations. Was there a gravitational pull, Bowlsend wondered? The whole thing shuddered from time to time. As they climbed further, was the strain increased?

It was indeed very extraordinary to be suspended in what was really a little portable platform swaying on wires high above a deep dark well: nice of them to have furnished the thing so comfortably with reassuring mahogany panels, a mirror, a fluted glass shade haloing the little electric light. And now came floor 2, and a decided click as they passed. More well-wall, and oddly the feeling of ascending a ladder. Why? It was just the same as down below. The mind, Bowlsend, the bloody old mind picturing everything—better not think about it, have another look at this chap's midriff, see if you can spot his name on his briefcase . . . initials only, and anyway, why not addresses on briefcases? Are you supposed to lose them only on premises where your initials are known? Ridiculous.

Floor number 3 dragged past—next stop out. He looked down at his own briefcase, and quickly went over what he had to say in the office above. The lift stopped, and he reached out a hand to the gate.

"I shouldn't do that," the other man's voice came, "we're not exactly there."

Bowlsend's eyes snapped up and on to blank concrete through the grill.

He controlled his voice: "What's happened, then?"

"Ask me," the man said.

At another time, Bowlsend might have snapped, "I've just done so," but not now, not now with his finger stabbing at button four and button four going in and out with no result whatever.

"Dead," he said, regretting the word.

It was very quiet, the word echoed loud and hollow now that the mechanical hum had stopped. "What do we do?" he added, as if it were rescuing them both back to life. "Press this?" His finger poised itself over the red alarm button. Somewhere in the past he remembered hearing someone say, "Never press it, it starts off all kinds of other stoppages." Or was that not about the alarm, but the button marked Emergency Stop?

The man made a muttering sound of indecision. Then spoke as if he, too, disliked those out-of-the-way buttons: "Ought to wait a minute or three, perhaps," he said.

A minute or three—spreading on the nonchalance rather heavily? Cheering up the troops with a little joke? Play orchestra play! As ship and lift went down to the bottom, damn him.

"Give it *two* minutes, then," Bowlsend said, flicking his watch out.

The man smiled. Again, with those clouded glasses, only with his mouth. A derisive smile?

"Might be here till Kingdom come," he said, "putting not too fine a limit on it."

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Ill-chosen phrase. But a casual one? Or was this a man of knowledge? Bowlsend stared at his little second hand creeping round more slowly than he could ever have imagined. While his mind saw sudden clear pictures of a frayed hawser, the ends sticking up like the hairs of a metal brush, and only one thin steel tendon left on the wheel flange, its tensile strength strained to a final snap. Were there two hawsers? Where was the wheel? One downstairs, possibly for the counterweight, that huge thing flat as a giant corrugated black pillbox? Was there another wheel on the roof of their box? Safety devices, something clamping them automatically to a side girder? There *must* be such things. The authorities would insist. Like fire prevention. But then safety devices are themselves mechanised, could this go wrong too? And think of the amount of fires, in spite of all prevention laws. . . .

As the little pointer went round he cursed himself for not knowing more of the mechanics of the thing. His car he could take to pieces and put together again. But lifts? Taken for granted. Absolute ignorance. Words like sheave, cam, flange flew about his mind, and alighted on nothing. There were overall conceptions like hydraulic: but at least, this was electric? A general power cut, then? That would be the most comfortable solution. Perhaps this other fellow knew more about it? Thinking this, Bowlsend felt sure the man did. For want of anyone else, the man automatically became a saviour. Despite his "kingdom come"—or even now because of it. How hard the concrete looked, bare and ruthless, through the iron grill.

"What now?" Bowlsend said, as a minute was ticked up. "Is there anything we can do?" It was a real query, he found himself appealing to this other chap as captain.

"As far as I can see," the man drawled, "which isn't all that far," pointing a finger at the concrete well-wall, "the only solution is a Greek one—a deus ex machina, one might say."

Christ, a bloody egg-head! Trapped with an egg-head—at this egg thought, frangibility zoomed, the egg was crushed and splattered all over the bottom of the shaft—and Bowlsend caught at himself, the man was at least taking it calmly.

"Well," Bowlsend said, keeping his own voice calm, "this is a pretty kettle of fish."

"Indeed it is. You from the North, then?"

Bowlsend peered at the clouded glasses, now seeing huge eyes dimly magnified behind. And hairs, big hairs, magnified with the eyes.

"No—why?"

"Your expression—odd one, really."

Was his face showing so much? Alarm, fear? But what impertinence—

"Kettle of fish," the man went on, "what does it mean? And why pretty?"

"Oh—I see. I've never really thought."

This was absurd, with the alarm button and the emergency button to attend to. Surely the "stop" button needed a push for extra safety? Or would that invalidate anyone pressing some rescue button somewhere?

"Why I said North," the man said, "was because of the salmon. It's in point of fact a Scottish phrase. A kilted party would go out to fish the salmon and thereafter attempt an impromptu boil-up on the riverbank." Propelled by his reflections, the man dropped his position of attention, and took a couple of steps to one side, as if pacing in thought. The lift immediately swayed. Did it sway? It certainly shuddered. "Which attempts resulted, often, in a pretty good mess-up."

"I say, I shouldn't do that," Bowlsend muttered.

"What?"

"Walk about. Might strain the thing."

The man raised his eyebrows, they most visibly elevated themselves, two half circles above the clouds beneath. "Oh?" he drawled.

"Don't really understand these things," Bowlsend apologized; and then hopefully: "But I expect you do?"

"Good heavens, no," the man said, shocked at so mundane a thought. "But let's consider those outside. The rescue team. It's mid-afternoon. A quarter to four. Absolutely tea-time, I'd say. Every blessed man-jack with his nose in a carton. Not forgetting every woman-jill. Could do," he added casually, "with a cup myself."

So slowly he talked—then Bowlsend suddenly spotted it, a big watery bead of perspiration starting at the top of the man's

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forehead, just where the hair began. He was a fake! This casual drawl was all pretence. Or—perhaps discipline, the fiddler in the orchestra-pit sawing away with the scenery crashing down in flames? But the man was obviously under pressure. It had a stiffening effect on Bowlsend, the man was human, frail and afraid—it was up to Bowlsend to help him.

"Rescue team, eh?" He managed a laugh. "Suppose in the last resort, the fire brigade comes and cuts us out of it, eh?" And immediately wished he had kept quiet, as the appalling sounds of sirens and bells occurred to him, the hissing of acetylene cutting gear, cups of tea handed down, blankets, doctors, morphine! He suddenly sprang at the gate, and pushed the handle further in—perhaps it had loosened, breaking the circuit, what circuit for God's sake? He pressed number 4 again. No result. But his footstep forward had given the lift another tremor, and itself made a sudden thump in all that silence. The thump seemed to sound right down the empty well beneath, the long dark drop.

"Sound as a bell, eh?" the voice drawled at his back. "Let's try the whole ca-, as they say, -boodle." And he reached forward and began to press button after button, floor after floor. "In case it's your particular floor that's the trouble," he muttered, Bowlsend felt a momentary resentment, *his* floor, of course, to blame—but said sharply, as no response came from any button, "Better sound the alarm."

The man had his finger poised on the red knob.

"Think so?" he asked. "Sink or swim?"

For some reason, unformed but definite in both of them, it was still a questionable move.

"Why not?" Bowlsend said, finally.

"All right then." And the finger came down on the red button. And they listened. Bells should have clanged into action, surely even an echo from some caretaker's hole, some work-room with indicators, cups of tea, a bench, pin-ups?

Nothing. Dead, dead silence, somehow hollow.

There were now several new beads of sweat on the man's forehead. Bowlsend suddenly thought, what if he panics, what the hell if I'm trapped with a gibbering hysteric, ripping at the door, thumping about, banging on the panels? As with swimming, knock him out? Suppose I missed—the man might hit back, there'd be a fight?

Unthinkable. He raised his head suddenly, extending his throat bitternwise for booming, and boomed loud and clear: "Hello! Hello, hell-o-o-o!"

From far above—or was it below?—a sly little voice answered: "Hello. Hell-o-o-o."

Little Sir Echo. That damned song, he thought, feeling now sick, really sick in his stomach. The echo had emphasised their utter loneliness.

"A-hoy! A-hoy up there!" the other man shouted. His voice was oddly high-pitched—hysteria? But he added as a pedantic surety: "Down there!"

Again the echo repeated, dismal and lost, each word. A lost little soul crying—and Bowlsend suddenly saw again clearly the torn hawser and the huge ton-heavy counterweight which must all the time be silently straining at it. Two weights, lift and counterweight, something had to break . . .?

And if it did? Smashing down in a second, a flash of blinding time, too sudden perhaps to notice—or in such a long second slowed down like a life-long film?—smashing dead on the sharp machinery in the pit below, sending the two of them where? Up against the roof. And Bowlsend slowly put his hands above his head and stood pretending he was smoothing his hair: then slowly bent down on one knee, as if to do a shoe-lace up—but his hands were on his head, he dragged one down to his shoe. If only that damned stripe-suit wasn't there, he'd curl up like a little ball in the corner. Balls bounce? He'd lie spreadeagle. No, he'd squat, muscles like springs.

SUDDENLY THE SOUND of a door opening somewhere beneath and near. Voices. Footsteps echoing on the tiled floor. Somebody was leaving an office: ". . . you'll let me have those consignments invoiced separately? See you Thursday week, then. . . ."

"Thursday week as ever was. . . ."

Bowlsend drew a deep breath of thanks, but that other man was quicker, he bent down towards the space between the floor and the wall, and shouted:

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"The lift's stuck!"

Voice now of a man speaking to himself: "Blast, better walk down." And then loud: "Thanks!" A clatter of hurrying footsteps away down the stairs. And just below, a door shutting.

"Hey—below there!" the man yelled.

Bowlsend couldn't get his breath. At last he said:

"We! You left out *we*!"

"What?"

"You sounded like an engineer." And suddenly he began banging on the mahogany panelling, sharp at first, then breaking down to a long rhythmic thump, thump, thump like a slow clap.

Between thumps the door beneath opened again. A voice called back into an office, "Seem to be mending it," and the door shut.

"Help!" yelled Bowlsend, too late. Help, sang the little voice far above—where? Among machinery, dead machinery, under a cold glass cupola?

The man drew out a handkerchief, began mopping the fear from his brow, caught Bowlsend's eye on him, and said, "Getting hot, isn't it?"

Bowlsend's heart jumped. Hot? Just two bodies? An open grill? The dreadful suspicion came and he sniffed. Friction, fire? A red-hot casing somewhere smouldering into the wooden furnishings? He sniffed, his mind seeking smoke, and sure enough discerned a vague metallic tang in the air, not exactly smoke, not exactly hot oil, but what. . . ?

It was only then that he realised he might never get out of it. And the regrets of conscience came, and unspoken words to a Power beyond—I'll do better, I'll be better to all of them, I'll drive them all out to that new marina, I'll see young Marlene gets her Family Planning on the Health, I'll put down a deposit on those tetrachromyl TV chairs Sammie wants . . . most of all, I'll be more *understanding*, they've got lives, thoughts, wishes, and oh heaven, we're pretty happy together, we'll make it a really happy household!

"He-e-lp!" boomed the stripe-suit, hauling in the word, beginning low, hauling up high to a shriek. Then again, again. Down and up, down and up. And the ceiling and the walls of the little cage closed in with the sound, it was a mere box they were shut in, an airless box with a hollow floor—Bowlsend's mind began to race, then he saw the man's breath could never last, so he joined in to help, and the two of them stood there howling like dogs shut in.

Nothing.

They both looked at each other breathless. Both tried to smile, crooked, downward smiles that instantly went.

"I'm no good on ladders," the man suddenly said "Dizzy—"

"Ladders?"

"They might have to cut us out. Put a ladder down to the roof."

"They?"

"Well—the—incidentally, do you know these offices well?"

"Not very."

"Not ever seen anyone around? Kind of a caretaker, janitor?"

HE SAW A POLISHED ROW of uniformed commissionaires in other offices. But not here. He racked his mind for an old man in a waistcoat, a spanner and a cup of tea in his gnarled, capable hands; but could remember none, the hall below was always bare, the lift stopped there basementless—that wheel, those damned plastic cartons. But perhaps there were steps to a basement? Lot of good that was, a man in an underground hole.

"No," he said, "I've never seen anyone."

The man drew out a packet of cigarettes. "Expect there'll be a night watchman," he said in a low voice. He raised his eyebrows at the cigarette packet, counting the few left, and put it back in his pocket.

Night watchman? They would be there as long as that? That's if—he sniffed again, caught the metal tang again—they were still suspended up here. Perhaps even now, though the time they had already been there made it feel somehow firmer, the strain was silently massing?

"The people," he said, "have got to leave their offices later?"

"Perhaps," the man said. "But it's summer, they're short-staffed for holidays. And it's Friday. And there's a test match. God knows how many funerals they've cooked up, anyway Friday afternoon's become a sort of Saturday morning now there's no Saturday morning."

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"But you've got somebody above on the fifth?"

"I'm just delivering a contract. On my way home. Letter box, they said."

"Good God! You mean—the whole week-end, then?"

The man said nothing.

But old Healey in the office he was going to visit? He'd surely be there. He began suddenly to shake. He saw Healey's face, the way it turned away any loaded question, Healey the dead-pan averter. Perhaps Healey, wanting to avoid the interview, had unintentionally-on-purpose already left? And was there not something stone-walling about Healey's middle-aged many-cardiganed secretary, a woman all spectacles, grey hair made for a deaf-aid . . . hadn't he seen a plastic something by her ear, could it have been only the spectacles? No, too much, a deaf secretary—but as he avoided the thought, he remembered stories of how people had ceased to help in emergency nowadays, walked right by people lying on the pavement, scattered when there was any trouble . . . but here it was simpler, they only had to call that old chap in the basement, or the police? But even that would make them miss their trains. . .?

He was shaking hard now, he felt afraid, but not so afraid as this, it was a shaking he had heard about from people in the war, and after motor accidents, an uncontrollable shaking disconnected from mind. There were his hands, his knees—he looked down at them as things separate from him—shaking, shivering, like a disease.

"You cold?" the man asked. "Funny, I'm hot." The big magnified eyes bored into him glaucously, finding him out.

"It's—it's claustrophobia," he stammered, and as he said it the truth welled up enormously closing him in, the walls, the grill, the floor, the terrible ceiling, five walls and that iron thing, all pressing hard in, like a crowd in a tunnel, no space, no breath, and his own breath abruptly grew difficult, he breathed in and out quickly, gasping, as if he had been running, and he opened his mouth wide to give out a last despairing bellow for help, a sound broken by breathlessness into an awful long high-pitched scream, with the walls curving in black now, muzzed and dotted all around.

AS IF IN ANSWER, the lift gave a shudder.

Then quietly began to travel upwards.

Healey, he dimly saw, was standing by the gates of floor 4.

Wonderful, wonderful Healey . . . he'd get his two-and-a-half per cent now, even three!

The grill doors opened. Healey said: "Why Bowlsend! I'd given you up!"

"We were—s-s-s-stuck," Bowlsend stammered, stepping quickly out, feeling the thing would fall away behind him.

"Me too," came the stripe-suit's voice. "I'm not staying in that confounded thing. Shanks's pony for the home run!" He looked much smaller out of the lift, platformed on the high wide passage. Had Bowlsend been slightly crouched all the time? And then to Bowlsend's astonishment the man opened his mouth in a first real laugh, and teeth sprouted everywhere, he had a whole mouthful of prominent horse-teeth stacked away, hidden all the time.

"Mmm," Healey muttered at the lift, "it *has* been a bit of a nuisance lately."

Bit of a nuisance!

Healey was peering into the lift. "But where's the lady? I thought I heard a woman—" then stopped himself, quickly looking at Bowlsend, ashamed of shaming him.

"Come on now," he said. "I expect you'd like a glass of water."

Glass of water! Brandy, hot tea, blankets! The bastard was so matter-of-fact, so everyday. Or wood from the neck up—not a fraction over two per cent for him. Yet Bowlsend clung close behind him in his relief, and noticed with surprise how his own shaking had stopped; it had indeed been fear then, though somehow not consciously felt by the brain, at least not to the extent of shaking.

In the office, he sipped the water. Sipped, because his confusion told him men in from the desert sipped, a draught was too much for their racked stomachs.

"How long were you stuck for?" Healey asked.

"Oh, about—" and Bowlsend wondered, it seemed of course like an hour, but then he could check on his watch? "About—well, a quarter of an hour," he said with surprise.

"Long enough, I suppose," Healey said with no feeling whatsoever, beginning to turn over papers.

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"What in hell went wrong with the thing?"

Healey frowned at a document: "Hmm, what? Oh, a circuit or something. Quite safe of course. They're attending to it."

Bowlsend was about to burst with a "Why the hell don't they put a Not Working notice up?" when he remembered his last piercing shout, and kept silent. He was so glad to be safe and out of the thing that his immediate relief put him in a relaxed, generous mood—that is, with anyone but Healey. Healey had heard that shout. He must be very cautious with Healey. So in the end Healey got his two-and-a-half per cent.

ON THE WAY HOME, Bowlsend called into the railway buffet and ordered himself a large brandy. An expensive drink, so he lingered over it and was late home.

By that time relief had expanded into pure strength. He felt bouncing fit, a man who triumphs over great odds. His last shout receded into a blinded past.

"Late?" he greeted Sammie. "I should think so. Got stuck in a bloody lift. For an hour."

"No," he said at table to his assembled family, "we are *not* going to the Wapham marina. Waste of time and money. It's time we all stiffened up a bit. Ought to be thankful we're alive, not spend the time always wanting more of this, more of that. And you Marlene, you're to be back home at eleven o'clock tonight. And every night, see?"

The Screen

This is the land where Stalin, like something out of Disney,
Snarls between clenched teeth: "Get Trotsky!",

Where a paramour of Charles II smiles at him lightly,
Winks, whispers "I'm mad at you, Your Majesty!",

And Keats says "Yes, we better had!" to Shelley,
Wicked Cromwell has desthroyed Oireland entoirely,

Robin Hood calls the Sheriff of Nottingham a heel, naturally,
Ladies love outlaws and all the monks are jolly.

The further in time the more acceptable; but latterly,
Where we *know* what they might have said, a bit silly—

Like Coghill trying to make Chaucer read easily.
It stands like a wide screen between us and History.

Gavin Ewart

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Robert Nisbet

The Nemesis of Authority

IN OUR DAY "authority" is not a popular word. We tend commonly to confuse it with power or coercion, and generally give it low ranking among the civil virtues. Not for a long time in the West has "authority" come close to "freedom" in acceptability to creative minds, especially those carrying high influence in the letters and arts. There have been notable exceptions, of course. Shakespeare, as we know, yielded to no one in respect for, almost reverence for, authority in society. And no one can read Boswell's *Life of Johnson* without vivid recognition of the passion for order and authority that dominated so much of Johnson's view of the world. In our century, interestingly, some of the writers who, by common assent, have been the boldest and most original minds of the age—Eliot, Yeats, Pound, among others—have had a profound feeling for authority in society.

And they have been right. Civil society, in whatever degree it may be said to exist at all, is a tissue of authorities, however loosely knit these may be in times of stress. Authority, unlike power or coercion, is not rooted in force, or threat of force. It is built into the very fabric of human association. Authority exists in the very roles and statuses of the social order. It is no more than an aspect, though a vital aspect, of the social bond. It is closely related to function, to membership, and to allegiance, in any degree whatever. In any reasonably stable community or association, function, authority, and membership form a seamless web. Freedom, in any positive, creative sense, is inseparable from a structure of authority—of rules, norms, roles, and statuses—which can alone give the stamp of character to the free mind. No mistake could be greater than that of counterposing freedom and authority. Freedom and power, freedom and coercion, yes. But not freedom and authority.

SO, TOO, IS THERE an indispensable element of authority in culture—and I use the term throughout this essay in the sense of high culture, of works of imagination in the arts, of scholarship, of science, and of artistic performance. Without the authority of taste and learning there can be no culture. "Pushpin", in Bentham's phrasing, is indeed as good as poetry unless there is an authority—call it consensus, if you will—that makes the distinction a firm one. There is the authority of a Shakespeare, Goethe, Einstein, or Picasso, just as surely as there is any other kind of authority. So too is there an authority of logic, of reason, taste, and genius, as well as the authority of the moral judgment and of the conscience that is its internal manifestation.

The early 19th-century social philosopher, Saint-Simon, divided history into "organic" and "critical" periods which, he thought, have succeeded one another endlessly since the beginning of human society. The first type is characterised by a high degree of social and moral authority; the second by challenge to authority. The distinction is a useful one and preferable to any unilinear trajectory in time such as that implied in the idea of progress. Whether for civilisation as a whole or any single civilisation or nation, it is possible to discern both organic and critical periods in its history. Manifestly our present age in America and the West, generally, is a critical period; some would think the term "anarchic", not extreme for what we have around us in the arts and literature, in culture generally. Revolt against authority has already reached a higher point than in any other period in the West since perhaps the final years of the Roman Empire. Apart from this revolt it is impossible, I believe, to understand the spreading "failure of nerve", the widening cultural sterility, the general spirit of absurdity and degradation that characterises so much of what

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is called the arts at the present time. If it were revolt solely against Government, or against War, or against the Economy, the problem would not be acute, at least in our large, diverse, and plural society. It is, however, revolt against any and all forms of authority, even those which manifest themselves as the simplest of techniques in the arts, the most elemental of canons of judgment. When revolt against all ordinary, traditional authorities had worn itself out, had become the object of boredom, there was nothing left but revolt against even the idea of revolt, and the results are to be seen in worship of the absurd, in consecration of the trivial and inane, and in a state of language and culture that leaves psychedelic experience almost the only way out.

The Contraction of Language

LET ME BEGIN WITH the authority of language. It is, of all forms of authority, the most fundamental to both the social bond and to culture. No community, no association, no culture can exist above the most primitive level without language and all the complex judgments and prejudgments, as well as words and syntax which compose it. Language need not be verbal, of course. There is the so-called silent language of facial and other physical expression which can, as we know, convey extraordinarily complex and subtle states of feeling. There are music, painting, sculpture, and mathematics, all forms of communication in which verbal language cannot carry us very far in reaching their meanings. Nevertheless, in all great ages of civilisation, language in the verbal sense has been crucial. One need but think of the ways Greek philosophers and poets of the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. gloried in, loved, caressed, and explored words in the ways of lovers.

It is this way with all the greater ages of cultural efflorescence. In the 12th and 13th centuries in Western Europe the languages passed from what was scarcely more than a kind of pidgin-speech to instruments of ever greater subtlety and versatility, making possible the beginnings of English, French, and other literatures in Europe. Again, in the late 16th and early 17th centuries we are in the presence of thousands of new words, words as rich in meaning as they are beautiful to ear and eye. Shakespeare, we know, was enthralled with language, and he could not have been the popular playwright he was had not a great many of his listeners been almost equally intoxicated by the Elizabethan language that came tumbling in freshets and rapids from the pens of Marlowe, Bacon, Shakespeare, Jonson, and dozens of others who, in founding the greatness of modern English founded also a form of cultural authority that was in its way as great as anything that came from the Greeks and Romans.

As there are ages of cultural efflorescence, so are there, on the evidence of history, ages of cultural sterility and degeneration. Such ages have a number of common characteristics. One of them is a retreat from language. It is more than retreat; it is, often on a wide scale, a repudiation of language and of the modes of thought which go with richness of language. Linguistic corruptions abound along with cultivations of feeling and emotion in which language, as such, is regarded almost as an enemy, its ordinary discipline as no more than sterile coercion. Under the guise of search for the simple or colloquial there is sabotage of all that is authoritative in language. In such ages, very commonly, there is a turning to the child, to the "noble savage", to the Barbarian: to those who may lack language in any full sense of the word but who possess (so it is declared by those bored with the disciplines of language) a form of wisdom, a purity, a natural morality that is alien to language.

IS OUR AGE such a one as I have just described? It is too soon to be sure. There are, however, more than a few of the familiar signs of such ages in our midst. The erosion of the authority, and community, of language can be seen in the semi-literate and hence language-hating ranks of militants for whom a single four-letter word, endlessly repeated, can be the stock of political attack and also, at the same time, of withdrawal from the toils and traps of a language they fear. The erosion can be seen in the language-rejecting circles of "encounter" and "sensitivity" cults in colleges and universities. It can be seen in a growing number of books and articles written by academic intellectuals of affluence and tenure in our major university departments of literature. I find it hard to conquer the belief that for more and more such intellectuals bad writing is a conscious, if rather absurd, mode of militance, of activism, comparable to the female delinquent's revolt against authority through sexual promiscuity.

Before me, as I write, is a volume of essays by Professor Richard Poirier (chairman, we are informed, of the "federated" departments of

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English at Rutgers). Professor Poirier is also an editor of *Partisan Review*, a magazine that has in recent years become a steady round-up of the kind of writing I refer to here. It may be taken for granted that Professor Poirier is earnestly radical; as radical, that is, as it is possible for an Ivy-League English professor to be. The title of his book—and it is as apt a title as I have seen in a long time—is *The Performing Self*.[1] From beginning to end the book is *of* the performing self, *by* the performing self, and *for* the performing self. I shall come to its message in a moment. For the moment it suffices to say that it falls among the works Goethe had in mind when he spoke to Eckermann critically of the kind of writer who "tried to make his Self observable, and to exhibit it as much as possible to the world."

The style alone of Professor Poirier's book is sufficient indication of the prominence of the "performing self." That the book's style of writing and thought is, on the whole, bad—ranging from the leaden and slovenly at one extreme to the inflated and pompous at the other—is not, however, what is chiefly at issue here. One could overlook the style as one tries to avoid looking at some physical disfigurement in another person were it not for the conclusion one is drawn to almost irresistibly that Professor Poirier has cultivated this style, has made it a calculated objective in some larger plan of attack. As I shall shortly indicate, the larger attack is upon the "waste" which is Professor Poirier's word for the whole of the literary heritage that has reached our age from the past. And within this, there is, one is obliged to believe, the tactical assault upon language and its authority. Calculatedly bad writing is, of course, one way of showing contempt for, of seeking to degrade, the authority of language.

At one point in the book, Professor Poirier refers disdainfully to a recent example of Saul Bellow's love of—his care for—language. I would myself think such love and care admirable. *Ecce!* A man who is devoted to syntax, to style, to the word, and who at the same time does not deprive us thereby of rich insight into the human condition.

I DO NOT WANT TO distort or exaggerate here. The current revolt against the word, against the authority of language, may be no more than an eddy; large to us who are close to it, but small in the longer and wider view. It is possible, though there is little if any evidence for this, that side by side with assault on what I call here the authority of language there goes the germination, and shortly the development of new, more vital and expressive language. After all, what was once called Whitman's "barbaric yawp" may be seen today to be a language of singular richness. But Whitman loved language; he rejoiced and luxuriated in it. Whatever he was revolting against was assuredly not language; only certain highly formalised, even fossilised, uses of words, metre, and subject. If those who today declare language an enemy of true feeling and innocence, who refer to the authority of language as "waste", could themselves be seen to be fashioning new ways of language, expressive of areas of human experience, of depths of meaning, of reaches of imagination, as the old ways are perhaps not expressive, we could take more comfort in "the performing self."

Unhappily, what we are seeing today is a manifestation, if not result, of an older, deeper more powerful movement that has been going on now, as George Steiner tells us in his excellent book *Language and Silence* (1967), for close to three centuries. I do not know when I have read a more illuminating piece of historical analysis than Steiner's chapter in this book titled "The Retreat From the Word." In brief compass it tells us a great deal about the background of the contemporary erosion I have been writing of. The following passage, taken from midpoint in his essay, is important:

> What I have argued so far is this: until the seventeenth century, the sphere of language encompassed nearly the whole of experience and reality; today, it comprises a narrower domain. It no longer articulates, or is relevant to, all major modes of action, thought, and sensibility. Large areas of meaning and praxis now belong to such non-verbal languages as mathematics, symbolic logic and formulas of chemical or electronic relation. Other areas belong to the sub-languages or anti-languages of non-objective art and *musique concrète*. The world of words has shrunk. One *cannot* talk of transfinite numbers except mathematically; one *should not*, suggests Wittgenstein, talk of ethics or aesthetics within presently available categories of discourse. And it is, I think, exceedingly difficult to speak meaningfully of a Jackson Pollock painting or a composition by Stockhausen. The circle has narrowed tremendously, for was there anything under heaven, be it science, metaphysics, art, or music, of which a Shakespeare, a Donne, and a Milton could not speak naturally, to which their words did not have natural access?

This historical contraction of the sphere of language, of the authority of language in society, that George Steiner describes for us so valuably,

[1] New York, Oxford University Press; London, Chatto & Windus.

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must be seen as the indispensable background of present assaults on language. It is unlikely that current primitivism of vocabulary—a flaunted primitivism indeed, in many areas of youth, among intellectuals and artists on TV talk-shows, and elsewhere—would be possible were it not for the prior displacement of the majesty of language in the spheres Mr Steiner writes of.

Steiner takes note of the fact that no later writer has ever displayed the vocabulary that Shakespeare did. He observes too that "the King James Bible, although it requires only 6,000 words, suggests that the conception of literacy prevailing at the time was far more comprehensive than ours." The essence of the matter, however, lies not in the number of words available, but "in the degree to which the resources of language are in actual current use." Steiner suggests, acknowledging the difficulties of all such estimates, that as much as fifty per cent of modern colloquial speech in England and America comprises only thirty-four basic words: "and to make themselves wisely understood, contemporary media of mass communication have had to reduce English to a semi-literate condition."

> The language of Shakespeare and Milton belongs to a stage of history in which words were in natural control of experienced life. The writer of today tends to use far fewer and simpler words, both because mass culture has watered down the concept of literacy and because the sum of realities of which words can give a necessary and sufficient account has sharply diminished.

Still another sign of the crisis of language in our day is the deepening and widening use of abstractions and generic terms for which no ready referent is easily found. We see this most plainly in the writing of the political Left, but Tocqueville long ago declared it a product of the democratic revolution. Democratic peoples, he observed in his *Democracy in America* (1835) are "passionately addicted to generic terms and abstract expressions."

> These abstract terms which abound in democratic languages, and which are used on every occasion without attaching them to any particular fact, enlarge and obscure the thoughts they are intended to convey; they render the mode of speech more succinct and the idea contained in it less clear. But with regard to language, democratic nations prefer obscurity to labour.

And then, with his usual astonishing insight, Tocqueville indicates some of the consequences of this specific form of debasement of language:

> I do not know, indeed, whether this loose style has not some secret charm for those who speak and write among these nations. As the men who live there are frequently left to the efforts of their individual powers of mind, they are almost always a prey to doubt; and as their situation in life is forever changing, they are never held fast to any of their opinions by the immobility of their fortunes. Men living in democratic countries, then, are apt to entertain unsettled ideas, and they require loose expressions to convey them. As they never know whether the idea they express today will be appropriate to the new position they may occupy tomorrow, they naturally acquire a liking for abstract terms. An abstract term is like a box with a false bottom; you may put in it what ideas you please, and take out again without being observed.[2]

George Orwell, himself a lifelong partisan of political causes but a notable literary craftsman, described, a generation ago, the debasement of the English language he could see going on around him.

> This mixture of vagueness and sheer incompetence is the most marked characteristic of modern English prose, and especially of any kind of political writing. As soon as certain topics are raised, the concrete melts into the abstract and no one seems able to think of turns of speech that are not hackneyed: prose consists less and less of *words* chosen for the sake of their meaning, and more and more of *phrases* tacked together like the sections of a prefabricated henhouse.[3]

Orwell goes on: "Political language—and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists—is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable."

THE FAULT IS BY NO MEANS a recent one. Think only of Rousseau and his General Will, of his declaration that the requirement of absolute obedience to the General Will is no more than "forcing individuals to be free." Think of Marx, and Capitalism and "the Proletariat." Think of the changes which have been rung on the single word People, not to mention "democracy", "human rights", and "freedom." Few would doubt, I think, that the debasement of language has increased enormously in recent years. Only such debasement could have made it possible to convince a national audience for a time that the hoodlumism of a small group of students on a tiny number of campuses, albeit major ones, was a "Revolution" by "Youth" on behalf of a "new Culture."

Assault on language and its authority has gone beyond the political Left, of course. A generation

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[2] *Democracy in America*. Vol. 2. Ch. 16.

[3] "Politics and the English Language" in *Shooting an Elephant* (1950). This essay was first published in 1946.

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ago Franklin Roosevelt, as President, could seek to "pack the Supreme Court" in words that disguised utterly this intent for many millions of persons; abstractions took care of that. So too did abstractions conceal each of the series of belligerent acts of the Roosevelt government which preceded Pearl Harbour. Without boneless abstractions and a public long since dependent on them, it is scarcely conceivable that the Kennedy and Johnson governments would have been able to hide so completely the acts and decisions which were taking us with rising military force into Viet Nam between 1961 and 1964. The steady diminution of confidence in what any President of the United States, or any high official in any of our governments in this country, has to say about a given matter cannot be reduced to simple chicanery. It is an aspect of the degradation of language that became first really apparent in government during the Roosevelt administrations—though the student of Woodrow Wilson can find a due share of this degradation in his parading of high-flown academic vocabulary.

Nothing so aids the advance of corruption and power alike as does prior degradation of not merely the ideas but also all the words and phrases making up language; for then the processes involved in corruption, power, and atomisation may be said to have begun. It was with full and sensitive awareness of what he was doing that George Orwell made the corruption of language, the final breakdown of the authority of language indeed, the key to the terrifying society he described for us in *1984*. And what is *Newspeak* but a rather easy development of the language around us today?

A generation that has formed itself linguistically around the primitivism of "like", "cool", "man", "feel", and, above all, "you know" will not be a difficult generation to enslave politically, socially, and culturally. Weaken, corrupt, dissolve the authority of language in a society, and the rest follows rather easily.

Performing Selves

CONSIDER NOW the culture—that is, the high culture—of our age, the culture of which literary imagination is the core, and we see, of course, a comparable and even related erosion of authority. Here, too, we are in the presence of what Professor Poirier has so aptly called "the performing self." We all know what the performer is in the arts—in, say, ballet, music, or theatre. Display is assuredly involved, but it is display of technique, of form and of discipline beyond the will or capacity of most of us. Even when the performing artist seems to be most natural and at ease—and such is the seeming effortlessness of great performances that "natural" becomes our common word of praise—we require only a split-second's reflection to be reminded that few things in life call for the subjection to authority, the self-discipline, and the mastery of technique that "being natural" does in a performance.

But Professor Poirier's "performing self" is very different from the performance of the artist as we have known this generally.

> By performance [he writes] I mean, in part, any self-discovering, self-watching, finally self-pleasing response to the pressures and difficulties I've been describing.

By "pressures and difficulties" Professor Poirier means, of course, the disciplines and authorities which are the very sinews of culture and its traditions but which to the mind in a state of barbarism, as Matthew Arnold thought of that word, can seem only a hopelessly impenetrable thicket. Professor Poirier is no barbarian, but he is wonderfully sympathetic to those who, by virtue of childhood or youth, have not yet had the time or opportunity to pass from the barbarism in which we are all born to the culture that has been, ever since the Greeks, the highest of values for this life.

Professor Poirier regards the techniques, the forms, the styles, and structures—which is to say, the authorities—of our inherited culture as so much "waste." Disorder is the thing: disorder in and for itself, disorder as the highest creative necessity of the artist or thinker. In an essay in *The Performing Self* titled "The Politics of Self-Parody" he identifies for us a genre of contemporary literature, one that very clearly he finds delicious and self-pleasing, that "makes fun of itself as it goes along." With a little practice anyone, he implies, can get in the game, even individuals of substantial talent or genius, if only they will follow the two simple rules of, first, making the naked self the arbiter of all delights and, second, declaring everything in culture, *everything*, to be no more than "waste."

Clearly, when you have become adept in the game of self-parody, you can make the whole world your oyster. For Professor Poirier, loving self and disorder above all things, seeks even to

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show us that not merely he and other present editors of Partisan Review but, when you come right down to it, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Nabokov and equally creative writers of the recent past can be best understood, best interpreted, in terms of their having treated literature "as a kind of enemy." Despite the well-attested, even commonplace, facts of Nabokov's, Eliot's and Joyce's profound knowledge of and respect for the traditions of culture—and, above all, for the riches of language, and of scholarship in the study of language—it is possible for Professor Poirier to jettison all of this and declare that in attack on culture alone and in consuming passion for disorder are to be found the true springs of the genius of these minds.

Professor Poirier has not the remotest notion, seemingly, that creativity—and this is as true in science and scholarship as it is in the imaginative arts—is never the consequence of nihilistic rejection of the forms and structures which the creative mind finds around him. It is invariably *a working from (and, generally, through) these to new forms and structures*: forms and structures that may be so original indeed as to make their relation to the past seem highly tenuous. That creative minds do indeed reveal capacity for liberating themselves in some degree from accepted modes of intellectual order, as a means of quickening the search for other modes, in no way means that passion for disorder, for "waste", is overriding. Least of all does it mean passion for "self-watching."

There is nothing strange in the fact that in such a book as *The Performing Self* we should find the hero to be—Youth! During the past decade or two in America, Youth has served much the same function for the romantic literary and political mind that the Noble Savage served in France in the late eighteenth century, that the Child, the Peasant, and, in due time, the Worker served in a later romanticism, including that peculiar form of romantic pastoralism that was the proletarian novel of the 1930s. No one would expect an avant-garde editor to be concerned with peasants or workers, not at the present time anyhow, and that pretty well leaves only Youth. For the joys of caressing, fondling, and murmuring of sweet nothings to Youth, Professor Poirier will, it would appear, pay any price short of felicitous English.

And what is Professor Poirier's Youth? Is it the aggregate of all young persons in America today? Clearly not. Is it, perhaps, the tiny minority that frequents places like Rutgers in search of feeling, sensitivity, encounter, maybe even a degree? Possibly. A Platonic idea against which all empirical reality of the young in America is totally irrelevant? Almost certainly. As I have already suggested, Professor Poirier's fondness for the word "youth" is but a single example of a fondness of abstractions in general which so often resemble wet sponges strung together.

I THINK IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT to find a single decade in the history of Western culture when so much barbarism—so much calculated onslaught against culture and convention in any form, and so much sheer degradation of both culture and the individual—passed into print, into music, into art, and on to the American stage as the decade of the 1960s. Daniel Bell has recently reminded us, in a thoughtful and penetrating examination of the matter, that the barbarism of that decade has roots—some of them, as Bell notes, in the period, 1895–1914. Bell writes:

> The modernist innovations that flared so effulgently between 1895 and 1914 wrought two extraordinary changes in culture. First there was a set of *formal* revolutions in the arts—the breakup of poetic syntax, the stream-of-consciousness in fiction, the multiplicity of the picture plane on the canvas, the rise of atonality in music, the loss of sequence in temporal representation and of foreground and background in spatial pictorialisation. And second there was a new presentation of the self which Roger Shattuck (in *The Banquet Years*) has characterised in terms of four traits—the cult of childhood; the delight in the absurd; the reversal of values so as to celebrate the baser rather than the higher impulses; and a concern with hallucination.[4]

As Bell goes on to point out, all of this (which was really a rather small movement, an eddy, in the earlier period) assumed grander proportions in the 1960s. The *infantilism*, with its stress on feelings, pains, and ecstasies of the young; the *absurdity*, as in the plays of Ionesco; the naked display of the most private parts of one's *self* (I am referring here to psychological self: display of genitalia has never seemed to me to be more than a harmless, if juvenile, enterprise) in every sphere of art; the *reversal of values* through which the consciously ugly and banal were glorified in visual art; the carefully contrived obscene in literature, and the raucous and loud in music, as in much rock (though I am not dismissing all rock here, only citing the rage for deafening

[4] Daniel Bell, "Sensibility in the 60's", *Commentary*, June 1971, p. 63.

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sound); and, of course the varied drug and psychedelic forms of *hallucination*—all of these, whatever else may be said of them, are plainly and indisputably assaults on the authority of culture.

Add to the above, as Daniel Bell also requires us to do by the cogency of his article and wealth of detail, the concern with violence and cruelty, the preoccupation with the sexually perverse indeed the worship of this, the verbal and substantive fascination with human excrement, the apocalyptic view of everything in American and Western society, and it is plain that the 1960s was a good deal more than the earlier period: more in content, intensity, and in sheer impact on culture. "The great aim of culture", Matthew Arnold wrote in the preface of his *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), "is the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail." But the great aim of the imaginative writing—with rare and remarkable exceptions, of course—in the 1960s was assault on perfection in any reasonably objective, or at least external, sense of this word. What Lionel Trilling, in a now historic phrase, had referred to as "adversary culture" became, by the 1960s, an all-out nihilism against culture, against the authority of culture, defined by Professor Poirier as being, in very large part, "waste."

For all the liberation achieved by the "performing self" in the 1960s, liberation from restrictions against pornography and obscenity, liberation from the constraints of style and structure, from the disciplines of hard work and objective theme, the 1960s proved to be (as Bell writes, in understatement) "empty of originality." Everybody wished to be totally free to write exactly as he wished; but alas, on the evidence, none of those in the vanguard of modernity had anything to say. Ironically, amusingly, those most obsessed by the self and its liberation from authority of any kind, those most clamantly concerned with revolt against conformity, are the ones who have in fact told us the least about human nature, who have, in their writings, manifested the least individuality and have shown themselves to be the most easily captured by the kind of conformity that lives in the fashions of the hour. One might have expected, given the adulation of Youth that was everywhere to be seen, at least a few of the qualities so often associated with youthfulness, such as boldness, buoyancy of style, thrust of originality. But one rarely found these in any degree. It is one more illustration of the fact that when revolt against authority proves so successful as to dislodge authority, and then has only itself to feed upon, the result is commonly banality, boredom, and the inane. Worship infantilism and the absurd long enough and one will oneself become just that: infantile and absurd. So the last decade would suggest.

The Cult of Contempt

THERE IS ALSO A REVOLT against the authority of reason to be seen in our age that may well equal any known before, even such an age as that of the final century of the ancient Roman Empire. Any age in which "feeling" has the ascendancy which this obscure value has in ours is bound to be an age not merely of irrationality but of assault on rationality. Clearly, I am not implying there is no merit or reality in feelings and emotions. It is only when they are elevated, as they have so manifestly been elevated during the past two decades, above reason and rationality, and above scholarship and science, that we may speak properly of the cult of feeling, and of the counter-attack of feeling on reason.[5]

This repudiation of the authority of reason is to be seen in many places: in those circles of university and college youth where feeling is exalted; in parts of the media, where objectivity is made synonymous with conformity in wide spheres of the arts, just referred to, where preoccupation with self, with display or exhibition of self, takes the almost invariable form of display of the least rational, the least reason-oriented, reason-aspiring, elements of the self; and in the New Left where the politics of confrontation and assault required demolition of any remaining faith in objectivity, of dispassionate reason.

It is so easy to be scornful of objectivity. Who, after all, is ever wholly objective? No one, of course. Nevertheless whatever authority reason has had in the West since the time of the pre-Socratic philosophers, whatever successes have attended it in many spheres of life, have followed acceptance of objectivity as at least a worthy goal. To declare that there is a form of knowledge that is not rooted wholly in self-interest—in some

[5] I made similar remarks in an essay I wrote several years ago for *The New York Times Book Review* on objectivity and rationality. Then I was naïve enough to suppose that praise of either was like praising Mother or ice cream. The bulk of hate mail I received convinced me otherwise.

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interest group in society, or in greed, avarice, passion, or apocalyptic obsession—that is rooted instead in a desire to observe one's world as honestly and dispassionately as is humanly possible, and to reach conclusions accordingly, is, surely, to declare something of superlative nobility: no matter how often we may fall short of declared purpose. The philosophical literature of the West is filled with notations of the idols of the mind, as they were called by Francis Bacon, which seek incessantly to engage our attention and to make difficult the route of reason. Everybody knows this. What else is the pursuit of method, of logic, of form, of intellectual and linguistic discipline about except the struggle to find means which will protect us from the most insistent of Bacon's idols? But to consecrate, to make an idol of and to worship pure subjectivism, and to deny utterly the possibility or importance of objectivity—this, plainly, is something novel.

Self-styled "radical" social scientists declare that objectivity is not even a proper end of the social sciences. From radical sociologist to radical political scientist to radical anthropologist, all across the spectrum of the social sciences, the refrain is the same: "Social scientists have heretofore sought to understand society. The point, however, is to destroy and then remake society." It is not, obviously, the mature Marx, who was capable of devoting himself for many years in the British Museum to the study of capitalism and society, but the youthful romantic Marx that these voices choose to echo. If I am thought to be exaggerating here, merely attend any of the annual meetings of the learned American societies, in the humanities as well as the social sciences.

I am, however, less concerned about the political radical's assault on the role of reason than about the deeper and more widespread assault that comes from what I can only call "the Cult of Individuality". By its very nature this cult—so well described, and also exalted, as a part of "Consciousness III" in Charles Reich's *The Greening of America* (1970)—is bound to gain far more members than any movement of political radicalism. For so little is required in the way of preparation for or membership in this "greening": not mind, not learning, not discipline. To be able to *feel*, to be able to communicate one's *feelings* to others—non-linguistically, so far as possible, save only for the ubiquitous "you know", certainly non-rationally—to be fascinated by others' feelings and emotions, to conceive of life as a kind of psychedelic theatre: all this, it if becomes much more widespread, will surely prove to be the greatest single assault on reason in the modern West. Drugs, for all their undoubted impact, seem to me but a minor current in the larger reality of the cult of feeling and of self. Samuel McCracken has made this point among others in his brilliant *Commentary* article on "Drugs of Habit and Drugs of Belief", showing correctly that the monumental distinction between the former (such drugs as the familiar alcohol, cigarette, and variations on sleeping pills, all drugs of habit) and the latter (which include marijuana, "speed", and LSD) lies in a cult-like affirmation of the drugs of belief (with the consequences for an entire culture clearly understood) and the utter absence of cult-dedication in the drugs of habit.

There is (and has been for more than two decades now) a visible erosion of the authority of the university in America, to be seen in the substantial degradation of the role and mission of the university in American life.[6] Inside the academy—and my words apply to colleges of the liberal arts type as well as universities—there would appear to be a widening indifference to the authority of curriculum, which is, after all, along with scholarship, just about all the academy has had to contribute to Western culture for nearly eight centuries. I take this indifference—this boredom, this *contempt*—for curriculum to be, in very large part, the result of the academy's decision, made in various ways and at various times over the past several decades, to abdicate its authority in those areas for which it is alone fitted to wield authority and to seek novel ways of interesting, then diverting, and (in due time) amusing students. The fascination with the "relevant" and with the imagined needs of "the student" began, really, not in the 1960s in the manifestos of the New Left on the campus, but in faculty reports, experiments, and other novelties during the period beginning just after World War II when the "cult of individuality" in the academy began to spread, to be succeeded, of course, in due time by the cult of feeling. From the first expressions of faculty contempt for curriculum at such places as Harvard and Berkeley to the kinds of student contempt to be found in sensitivity sessions and encounters of visceral communion, where feeling

[6] See my recent book, *The Degradation of The Academic Dogma* (1970).

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is sovereign, there is, one must conclude, a direct line.

The collapse of academic authority in the 1960s was but the surfacing of a collapse that had become real during the 1940s and the 1950s when the mission of the university was so profoundly changed from that of education to that of serving, saving, healing, reforming, even revolutionising, the social order. The dogma of "knowledge for its own sake" became a degraded dogma in the university during the period after World War II. New conceptions of the uses of knowledge flourished; a new breed of academic man assumed power and influence in university circles; the research institute and the "project" succeeded in importance both the scholar's study and the classroom. Given the degradation of the historic academic dogma, it is hardly strange that there should be, at one and the same time, a degradation of each of the roles which had been, for so many centuries, associated with the academic dogma: the roles of teacher and scholar foremost.

No single manifestation of the erosion of authority in American society seems to me quite as symptomatic of the larger problem as does the erosion of academic authority and, with it, the dissolution of the academic community. For in America, unlike Europe where non-academic traditions of learning tend still to be rather strong, the tie between the university and the intellectual community as a whole, between the academic dogma and the arts and sciences generally, has been a very nearly vital one.

Intellectuals & Power

If REVOLT against authority is the most obvious sign of the performing self in our midst, there is another, hardly less obvious and in the long run more fateful to the political community: the passion for power. It is impossible to miss among the selfsame intellectuals who have made destruction of traditional authority their sovereign aim a fascination with the kind of power that is inseparable from social movements and crusades and that is invariably embodied in a single charismatic person. Such power gives the illusion of being based in "the people", of being redemptive and avenging at one and the same time, of proffering community, and of rescuing the alienated and anomic from the boredoms and corruptions of ordinary existence.

On the far Left today, where revolt against language, culture, and other forms of traditional authority is extreme, this fascination with absolute, personified power takes the common form of adoration of Mao and Castro. But even among those intellectuals too sophisticated to be caught with the sayings of Chairman Mao in their libraries, there is unmistakable interest in the kind of power I am writing of here. A substantial amount of the interest shown by Left intellectuals in Edward Kennedy and, before him, Robert Kennedy, springs without question from these roots. Irrespective of Kennedy's own political philosophy and aims, his unique appeal to diverse sectors of the population, the almost magical effect he has upon social elements at all levels in American society, and the by-now well-fixed image of a mind rooted in tragedy and crisis make Edward Kennedy a glittering prize to the intellectual Left in America.

There is nothing new in the relation between intellectuals and power in the West. We see it vividly in Renaissance Florence. The humanists, who were so much like intellectuals of our own day in their fascination with language, phrase, polemic, and in their cultivation of brilliance rather than learning or profundity, adored the kind of power they found in the typical Italian despot of the period. There were exceptions, to be sure, but not many. The majority of them detested the church, the guild, the monastery, and the university in much the way that our own intellectuals detest equivalent structures in traditional society. The humanists were performing selves, as Burckhardt makes so clear for all who know how to read him on the subject of the Renaissance. The asserted individualism of the Renaissance was one side of a coin that had centralising, atomising power on the other.

The same is generally true of the *philosophes* of the French Enlightenment. No greater illusion is possible in our study of history than to suppose that men like Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau were single-mindedly interested in liberty—except for themselves in their onslaughts against Church and traditional authority generally. The *philosophes'* interest was in power, which they saw as the indispensable means of exterminating the social order around them and then bringing into being, as Tocqueville has put it,

> an imaginary ideal society in which all was simple, uniform, coherent, equitable, and rational in the full sense of the term.

Hence the *philosophes'* abundantly recorded fawning upon the "enlightened" despots of the

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century, upon certain pliable ministers in the French government, and upon wealthy *arrivistes* in French society.

But it was Napoleon—and after him *l'idée napoléonienne* which can be seen shedding its incandescence over large areas of the European landscape—who, above any other figure in modern history, provided intellectuals with their ideal of the personification of absolute power. It is an ideal that survives to the present moment, in America as well as Europe. Napoleon, a performing self in every sense of the word, as major political and military figures usually are, the peculiar relationship he effected with the French people, the uniquely centralised, rationalised, and collectivised power he brought into being, the lustre he seems to have had even for a Goethe, not to mention the adoring remnants of his revolutionary armies, all this could not help but create the sense of imminent realisation of the kind of power Quattrocento humanists and *philosophes* in the 18th century had dreamed of. That Napoleon's own mind was mediocre in all areas save war and political cunning did not bother the academic and other intellectuals who served him any more than the intrinsic mediocrity of the Kennedy mind bothers the intellectuals of the present time. What matters is the relationship between the man of power and the broad masses of people. Michels has well described this relationship in his description of the Caesaro-Napoleonic idea:

> Once elected, the chosen of the people can no longer be opposed in any way. He personifies the majority, and all resistance to his will is anti-democratic. The leader of such a democracy is irremovable, for the nation, having once spoken, cannot contradict itself. . . . One of the consequences of the theory of the popular will being subsumed in the supreme executive is that the elements which intervene between the latter and the former, the public officials, that is to say, must be kept in a state of the strictest possible dependence upon the central authority, which in its turn, depends upon the people. The least manifestation of liberty on the part of the bureaucracy would be tantamount to a rebellion against the sovereignty of the citizens. . . . Bonapartism does not recognise any intermediate links.[7]

Of course the "election" of such a figure is merely accidental by comparison with what is vital in the matter. Whether office is captured through free ballot or through some variant of a military *coup* is of less importance than the man himself and the distinctive kind of power embodied in him. Of utmost importance is the atmosphere of crisis, real or contrived. The Napoleonic idea can flourish only in the context of a perceived crisis in which all elements of a social order are declared to be alienated and anomic, in which the conservation indeed of what is declared to be the true spirit or soul of the nation is made to seem at stake, and in which approaches to all problems can be set in the imagery of military crusade. It must never be forgotten that in the present century the military tunic is the most visible symbol of the revolutionary spirit in all places, such as China, Cuba, Russia, and Albania, where that spirit has triumphed and become immovable. War, quite as much as revolution, is the heroic dish at the political banquet.

THE REVOLT AGAINST AUTHORITY, the consecration of disorder, waste, and anarchy in traditional society, these are indeed icons of all Left intellectuals at the present time. But so, as I am arguing, is dedication to power, the kind of power that can best be expressed through some single individual in whom the stuff of the Caesaro-Napoleonic mystique—with whatever allowance necessary for time, circumstance, and the indwelling nature of the individual concerned—can be found, or if necessary contrived. The annihilation of authority through elevation of the performing self in culture can leave only an intolerable vacuum. What is absolutely required is the performing self in politics whose performance can be counted upon to appeal to the masses in sufficient number to make possible a final degradation of authority in society, but also a profound and redeeming sense of community: that is, community in crusade, in common cause, in uncommon strategies, in power that, through the alembic of the political imagination, is not power but a higher freedom.

For two decades now in America the fundamental theme of the intellectual Left has been revolt against traditional authority. What we may now expect, in rising volume and intensity, is the correlative theme, no less than the nemesis of authority: the appeal for power, which will be called freedom—for élites, which will be called equality—and for collectivism, which will be called humanitarianism.

Anyone who thinks that two centuries of democracy in America immunise it to the appeal of the kind of power I am describing here has

[7] Robert Michels, *Political Parties* (Free Press, 1949), pp. 218–19

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forgotten the impact made upon the American mind during the 1930s, a decade of economic crisis against which FDR and Congress vainly fought, by Huey Long. There is not the slightest doubt that this man's power was on its way to becoming something very formidable indeed at the time of his assassination. Nor can one easily forget the immense following that the radio priest, Father Coughlin, had, beginning with his power base among Roman Catholics but spreading out to include very diverse elements in American society.

It is highly unlikely that any Bonapartist or Gaullist figure in America within the next decade will much resemble a Huey Long. I think such a figure would seem rather uncouth, even faintly ridiculous, to a nation that has known cultural affluence to the degree America has since World War II. His television image, which is of course absolutely crucial, would be an unfavourable one in our society today, a society in which Left intellectuals, in the universities, in the media, in the churches, and elsewhere, carry far more influence, direct and indirect, than was possible back in the 1930s. Much more likely, it would seem, is a type that is upper-class in origin, ivy-league in education, elegant and graceful in manner but possessed too of a magnetic warmth that can appeal to ethnic and religious minorities, to all who are, or feel themselves to be, in any way frustrated, deprived, and alienated, that can by sheer personality make all of these feel recognised and members of a national political community, that, perhaps above all, can be depended upon to mobilise youth in the way that Frederick II, Napoleon, and also, alas, Hitler did, and that has, finally, a secure and substantial base of power such as that constituted in America today by the Roman Catholic church, itself in a kind of critical ferment. Such a being would be, by the standards of our present age, truly a performing self of heroic mould. One would not have to look far to find such a being.

WHETHER THIS TYPE of performing self will indeed reach centre stage depends, however, upon context and event. There is no substitute for *perceived crisis* in the eruptions of the Caesars, Cromwells, and Napoleons of history. If you do not in fact have a crisis, it becomes necessary to create one. Intellectuals have known this since Plato. For Caesar to succeed there had to be war, treason, and a pervading sense of insecurity among the Roman masses. Napoleon would be unthinkable without the perceived disorder left by the Revolution and without the buoyant sense created by military victories inspired by sense of crusade. Hitler required, among other things, the "stab in the back" mentality deriving from German defeat in World War I, though he could not have triumphed even then had it not been for gathering hatred among large sections of the German population of some of the cultural effluvia of Weimar and, with such effluvia, the widespread sense of intellectual and moral anarchy. In the America of the 1930s neither Huey Long nor Father Coughlin could have reached his power had there not been a paralysing economic depression with the established government coming to seem more and more impotent and the desire for a common cause or crusade more and more frustrated.

No such crisis exists in America at the present time. But any reader of history knows that crisis has many faces, that crisis perceived is not the less crisis for possible lack of actual foundation, and that the affinity between intellectuals and crisis is a very old one in the West.

I and my Thoughts of You

Remember that old thorn bush
amazed by
its one flower?

If I stood by it, would it be diminished
as an image must be when
it stands beside
what it's an image of?

Norman MacCaig

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Roy Fuller

The Voice of the Absent

1

We're in the second phase
Of my failure to appear,
Aren't we? At first your sadness
Seemed planned to prove my worth:
For me, the sacrifice
Was to renounce my habits.
But now I almost enjoy
My bizarre liberty:
Responsibilities gone
I never knew I owed;
Even finding no need to worry
About you—your grief, that is.
I see you, too, have changed
Your customs, gaining freedom—
To draw on my estate,
Sob before acquaintances,
To sketch another life
(In which eventually
You'd be the absent one:
A state whose consolations
You can't possibly conceive).

2

We can never meet, we truants, any more
Than you can, the lost ones of our former lives.
And yet we see more clearly that they form,
With us, a whole confederacy of truth.
For in our novel state they won't ever be
Forgotten, as they are in your sad world,
At best when memory's last agent goes.
Even our siblings, dead in infancy,
Are here remembered—all the more vividly
Now that our pattern is complete, the forces
That made it such, to the last curlicue,
expounded.
And our disguises left behind—wardrobes
Of spies' hats, executive flannel, retired man's
slacks,
Each presenting its problem of disposal—
Play-acting is no longer possible.
But one supposes you aware of that,
Since our rhetorical gestures of farewell—
The odes and epitaphs that moved you, though
Penned by the living—have really come to pass.

3

I seem to hear you say
"Don't make too strenuous
An effort to return."
Is it that you fear
To have to live again
With terminating sickness
Or that you envisage
The graveyard's further ravage
Of the slight thickness on
The bone, that kept your love?

Or has your loss already
Changed to a kind of art
Where the obtrusion of
A hasty scribbled note,
Its source, would give away
The immortality
Your life's emotions claim?

Whatever the cause, your sense
Owns an essential rightness:
Humankind's acceptance
Of time outside its scale—
Even the deathbed brightness
Of once beneficent suns.

4

Why do we return? Not in the darkened rooms
Of rattling tambourines and butter muslin;
But as you boil an egg or make the bed
You hear us and answer: "Darling?"

Yes, that's our wish, after all, whatever ancient
Boredom or intervening cause of unwelcome
Would face us, for our presence once again
To be taken all for granted.

We don't come in reality, alas!
For we're in a place that even cosmologists,
Speculating on collapsed stars and anti-matter,
Couldn't make more alien.

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Golo Mann

The History Lesson

On Not Learning the Meaning of the Past

IT WAS the American philosopher John Dewey who said:

> Let us admit the case of the conservative: if we once start thinking no one can guarantee where we shall come out, except that many objects, ends and institutions are doomed. Every thinker puts some portion of an apparently stable world in peril and no one can wholly predict what will emerge in its place.

Nowadays much is challenged and all things are being questioned. The value of tradition, practically speaking, lay in the unchallenged security of all institutions and the values upon which they were based. That was how things were with our fathers, and that is how they used to be with us. The result was a sense of comfortable security that is now lost. We are in the midst of a movement, one might say a cataract, on whose banks, at whose still innocuous beginnings, John Dewey stood sixty or seventy years ago. There is literally not one single institution, not one single custom, that is not being continually investigated as to whether it was valid in the past, whether it is valid today, whether it will still be valid tomorrow.

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Why should there still be literature? Why should there be novels and stories? A book, a collection of novellas, recently found its way on to my desk bearing the title *An End to Story-telling*. The poems one reads today might often also be called *An End to Poetry*. Why should there still be theatre, and even classical theatre? Why should there still be professors, why parliaments, why churches, why cemeteries, why department stores, why teachers and pupils, why spelling and so on and so forth. Why should there still be relics of the old type of university? Why study history? Why history lessons for the young and not lessons in law, in psychology, in biochemistry or astrophysics? And why teach physics? Someone said to me recently: "I got nothing whatever out of physics at school. I never used it later, I never needed to. I have no idea how a telephone works and for my purposes I don't need to know. In a household crisis I can change a fuse, but I have no idea what happens when I do. . . ."

Speaking from the viewpoint of tradition—but a tradition, be it noted, which must be prepared at any time to face the question as to its validity—I would formulate the task to be fulfilled by the school (and for our present purposes I refer to the top-grade secondary school, or the so-called grammar school) as follows. It must aid the young person to develop his thinking, to cultivate his mind. Towards the end of the long course there may be a place for the initial stages of specialisation. Essential to the whole process is the raising of questions, the demonstration of methods and the provision of information in a wide variety of fields. History is one of them. At first glance this appears perfectly in order, because history has been a school subject for centuries: first as the history of classical an-

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tiquity, then as the history of one's own country, the reigning dynasty and its deeds of heroism, then as universal history, or at least the history of Christendom, with a strong emphasis on one's own nation, with various possible subdivisions. Must this be so? Must it continue to be so? The answer depends upon what we want. If we wish to educate young people—but the word "educate" is now tabu—if we wish to *help* young people with their training so they may as quickly as possible learn a special skill and earn as much money as possible, if all we want to provide them with is a "sound practical education", if we want to turn them as quickly as possible into what the German student rebels calls *Fachidioten*, "specialist idiots", then it need not be so. Then, to be consistent, we ought to teach children reading, writing, and arithmetic and let them, from about the age of ten, concentrate on a single field of knowledge. Where would this lead? I don't think anyone should be at a loss for an answer. It would lead to mechanised barbarism. It would indeed lead to idiocy, whether specialist or not.

THERE IS ONE OBJECTION I should like to forestall immediately. In Germany during the first third of the present century we had the *Gymnasium*, or grammar school, run on supposedly Humboldtian lines. In such grammar schools history, humanism, and the noblest literature were cultivated. But this did not prevent many ex-pupils of grammar schools, many German Ph.Ds and professors, from behaving in the political sphere more foolishly, more ignorantly and indeed more infamously than many who had never heard of Plato, Cicero, or Erasmus. This objection has validity; it cannot be dismissed out of hand. Nevertheless I would reply that in my youth the teaching of history in Germany was bad. Naturally there were then, as in every period, excellent, sensible, liberal history teachers. There were also well-written history books (for example, the work by Franz Schnabel). In general, however, our teachers did not get beyond the wicked Napoleon III and the innocent Bismarck, the commercial envy of the British and the peace-loving Bethmann Hollweg, the Stab-in-the-Army's-back in 1918, and so on. The teaching of history was nationalistic and in the highest degree provincial—not provincial in the good sense that we learned something about real life in our more immediate environment, but in the sense of a plaintive, self-justifying restriction of vision, a circling around Berlin and the Wilhelmstrasse. This was hardly calculated to bear good fruit. And things were little different at the universities. I still recall with a shudder my ignorance not merely of the world at large, but even of the neighbouring European states, when I had to leave Germany in 1933. Reading today's textbooks the difference in this respect is highly gratifying.

Moreover, teaching can never be more than something offered to the student; it is up to him to make good use of it or not. In all probability the majority will not make good use of what they are offered, and never have done. These are platitudes but none the less true; and they are exemplified in the parable of the seed that falls on fertile or on barren soil. The ultimate, the loftiest aim of history teaching would be, to use a more emphatic phrase, to inculcate a little wisdom. To teach wisdom is a much less certain undertaking than to teach a language or a technical skill. Here we must fall back upon the other platitude, the other oft-repeated consolation that it is worth the effort if only a small minority gain something from it.

WHY, QUITE APART FROM the inherited canon of scholastic subjects, does awareness of the past, a knowledge of history, form an essential part of the education of the young mind? Let me quote one standard European response, the answer given a few years ago by the official organ of the Bavarian Ministry of Education:

> The teaching of history should provide an insight into the nature of man and the multiplicity of human life, as well as an idea of the operation of social groups and the motives for their activities. It should clearly demonstrate that in political life forces from all spheres of existence are at work. In this way history teaching can assist the young person to find his own standpoint and recognise the tasks confronting him in public life.

It then states that with regard to the first three-year course, among other things, it should also awaken a "time sense". These formulae, as far as they go, seem to me quite good—particularly that referring to the development of a *Zeitsinn*. Time sense means here an understanding of the chains of events, of interrelationships, of transformations, innovations, the persistence of the old within the new. This includes—and I am not ashamed to say so—dates. Without chronology time has no clearly defined content. Time may be divided up according to names, as the Romans did and as we still do (or did in my youth), "during so-and-so's reign"; but what use are names to us

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if we cannot situate them in time. So dates have to be learned in order to help establish the sequence of events, the interconnexions. Not many, but some. In my view, the first three-year course is best suited to this purpose. If candidates for the final examination at a German school don't know whether the Thirty Years War took place before or after Luther—and this does happen—if this were the rule, I should say: Give it up, there's no point going on. . . . *Ergo,* it must not become the rule, and we must not give up. We must not yield to the teen-agers' every mood, to every passing vogue they have picked up from outside, as though they always and everywhere knew better than their elders what is good for them.

I AM NOT SPEAKING ENTIRELY without practical experience. For a long time I taught history at a college in California. During the first two years my students, aged eighteen to twenty-two, just about reached the level of knowledge of European sixth-formers, if they reached it at all. I will frankly admit that I had to make the most frightful effort to arouse their interest and was often on the verge of despair. At the same time, compared with a European secondary-school teacher, I had a light work load, having to teach only six hours a week, as against four or five a day. Thus I could be thoroughly prepared and expend infinitely more energy on each class, each lecture. Sometimes I succeeded, sometimes I did not. It depended on whether there were a few students in the class whose enthusiasm was fired and who were sufficiently respected to persuade their comrades to keep decently, if sleepily, quiet. "The poor fellow is trying so hard, give him a chance. . . ." It also depended on the subject. They found Rome interesting with its political revolutions and the rapid expansion of the Empire. I guessed why this interested them and I often used little tricks to keep their interest alive. Thus I made Caesar always address Cicero as "Senator", although this is not to be found in Cicero's letters. When I read out the letter from a senior Egyptian civil servant to a subordinate, written some time in the first century B.C., that is to say at a time when Egypt's independence was already seriously eroded—a letter telling the subordinate that a very influential Roman politician would shortly be arriving in Alexandria and that he must be expensively entertained and shown the pyramids and other antiquities—there was no need for me to overtly draw a parallel with an American VIP visiting Italy or Greece in 1950; it was inescapable. I also made copious use of anecdotes from Suetonius and related authors, and I considered such illustrations perfectly legitimate. History, says the modern educational official, should also be "a pleasure", in the literal meaning of the word it should *interest;* that is to say the student should feel as though he were present in person. This demands colour, and colour is to be found in plenty in the documents, the ancient reports and letters. The greatest inventor is history itself—as was so well known, for example, to Shakespeare, who preferred to discover rather than to invent. Tragedy and comedy, irony and surprise, dialectics, the noble and the mediocre, and the base—all are to be found in history in profusion. I see no reason to conceal the fact.

Today there is a triumphant tendency to move away from *histoire événementelle,* history as an account of events, toward analytical, sociological history, in the extreme case toward history as "mobile statistics," as a French historian has put it. I have nothing against the researches undertaken by this author and his colleagues; but I can only see them as a sideline, really as auxiliary studies to history. Such investigations are concerned with graphs, population and production figures: with abstractions. But real life is not an abstraction. Even if we no longer consider kings, courts, and cabinet politics as the main subjects of study—and I would agree with this, although with reservations—even if we shift ordinary life in the past with its fulfilments and wretchedness into the centre of the stage, even then an anthology taken from real life, like the recently published book by Peter Lahnstein *Auf der Suche nach der guten alten Zeit* (In Search of the Good Old Days), seems to me incomparably more useful to the history teacher than any mathematicised history. Mathematics is not in the least boring, but mathematical history is boring because it is inadequate, because it fails to grasp the essence of the subject. And no one can say that the mathematicised strategy, the quantified power politics, as practised today under the direction of certain American academics with an eye on The Pentagon and the White House has been particularly successful.

ONE ALWAYS SUSPECTED that as a nation the Americans have never been history conscious. After all, the very first emigrations to America, and then the founding of the Union,

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and then the mass emigrations of the nineteenth century were a denial of Europe, a denial of the Old World and the history of the Old World. Then, not without surprise, I found after my return that the thing I had suffered from in America—the fact that there were only present and future and practical concerns, but no past, apart from certain rather artificial specialities—was increasingly evident in Europe. So much so that in this respect the distinction between the two civilisations has almost disappeared. When I walk today through Munich and see the Elector Maximilian still astride his horse in the Wittelsbacher Platz, and then see the new districts of the city and the satellite towns, I cannot help asking myself: What is this foreigner still doing here? Out of a thousand people who drive or walk past him scarcely one still knows who he was, what he was, what Bavaria was in those days and so on. This is a feeling that may horrify the historically-minded. Alienation is a fashionable word nowadays, but this is also a form of alienation: the total alienation of the past that has for so long been a dimension of European life. And naturally this alienation is intimately connected with the other one, to which sociologists refer. A person to whom his past is alien, who despises it or loses the memory of it, becomes alien to himself; and the same applies *mutatis mutandis* to society. Therefore when we speak of "overcoming alienation" it seems to me, unlike our revolutionaries, that the recovery or re-establishment of historical consciousness is part of the task. The question is how.

IT IS ALL TOO OBVIOUS which factors stand opposed to an interest in history and, practically speaking, to the teaching of history. There are the manifold, powerful and lurid impressions and attractions of contemporary life. There is the well-founded feeling that we are living in an age that in many respects is without historical parallel; volumes could be filled with the catalogue of what exists today (and will exist tomorrow) but "never existed before", the list of spheres in which developments are being accelerated and intensified as "never before." There are the apocalyptic predictions and statistics with which we are bombarded daily. Here, alongside many other contributory factors—boredom with prosperity and the long European peace, arrogance, delight in petty terrorism and other such human motives that always play their part—it is probably here that we must seek the deepest reason for what is summarily termed the Unrest of Youth. Here lie the reasons why radical critiques of the present and vast enquiries into the future are held to be more urgently necessary than a study of the past. But study of the future and of history contradict one another only at first glance. Conceptually, past and future belong together, are subsumed under the concept of time; a person who knows no past will be unable to grasp any future. The futurologist Karl Marx, who today is once more idolised, was in his own way an important historian. Many historians studied the past, especially the recent past that runs out into the present, precisely for the sake of the future. De Tocqueville, in my opinion, was extraordinarily successful in this—indeed, more successful, seen from the point of view of the present, than Marx. Other were less successful. Even Oswald Spengler, whom I personally find repugnant and who tried to force the whole of human history into a rigid system in order to reduce present and future to a single formula, unquestionably discerned intuitively certain facts that were by no means obvious at the time.

The man who is living in civilisation, not in mere nature—who is threatened by his civilisation and not by mere nature—needs an awareness of history. If today he refuses to develop it, if young people don't want to hear about the past, the basic question arises again as to whether one ought to give way to this. Now, who is giving way here, and who ought not to give way here? In olden times it was the established hereditary authority, at first advised by the Church, finally on its own initiative. This establishment no longer exists. All those who exercise an influence on schools—ministries, parliaments, education committees, parent-teacher associations—derive their authority from the democratic process. But to say that society determines its own destiny does not mean that no guidance, no directions can or should be given. There is pretty general agreement today (and this agreement will have to become even more complete) that science and applied science, technology and productivity cannot simply be left to run where they wish to run. The United States Congress, with its veto on supersonic aeroplanes, has recently given an impressive example of this. I see no reason why education, culture, *Geist* or whatever one likes to call it, must be allowed to run just as it pleases, why here too a certain

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measure of guidance and control should not be both possible and necessary.

A GERMAN HISTORY TEACHER told me the other day that he wanted to start his course with the history of the French Revolution, as laid down by the curriculum. His pupils protested: "What's that old crap to us?" Instead they wanted the history of the workers' movement. The teacher gave way. Perhaps I too should have given way, because I am no great hero; but he ought not to have given way. He then attempted, via Gracchus Babeuf and other secondary figures, to slip the great revolution in through the back door. If I had the honour to be a minister of education I should give teachers of history a great deal of freedom and make examination regulations, especially those for the school-leaving examination, correspondingly elastic. But I should not give them the freedom to surrender at any time to the will of the pupils.

It goes without saying how I, as a dilettante, picture the first three years of teaching. There can be no doubt that a lot will have to be learned, and that it is more difficult to lay the foundations of knowledge than it used to be. As children we read the myths of classical antiquity; Athens and Sparta were nothing new to us when these names first cropped up at school. We read Walter Scott's novels or Hauff's *Lichtenstein* in cheap editions for the young, to say nothing of such patriotic books as *Deutsche Treue, Welsche Tücke* (German Faith, Foreign Trickery), *Der grosse Konig und sein Rekrut* (The Great King and his Recruit) and the like. That such potboilers have long since disappeared is naturally all to the good. Nevertheless they did offer a convenient means of painlessly introducing the twelve-year-old to history, whose topics, when he first hears them in school, now come to him like a bolt from the blue. I have already said that dates have to be learned. To take modern history as an example: 1789, 1815, 1832, 1848, the 1860s to 1871, 1890, 1914, 1918, 1926, 1929 and so on. These are epochs, each requiring to be filled with events and again with a few dates. Anyone who cannot manage that is unlikely to achieve such great things in other subjects that one shouldn't question whether a grammar school is really the right place for him. It is the second, advanced course which I want to discuss here, the course during which the history teacher is dealing with rapidly growing, rebellious intelligences that demand the difficult, not the flat and comfortable.

In my day, forty-five years ago, the system was for the teacher to hear us on our homework during the first quarter of an hour, while during the remaining half an hour he delivered a little lecture, that is to say he told stories. This method has probably long since been abandoned. I always regarded history lectures at university as nonsensical and as a student I never listened to one; as a Professor in German universities I came to grief on the futility of this method of teaching. It was valid before Johannes Gutenberg, but not for the last five hundred years. The pupils ought to read at home. The two hours of class (or however many it is) must be used for the discusion of the reading matter. The new history books that I know are most sensibly written; the illustrations are excellent, the information neatly arranged; adequate space is devoted to economic, technical and social developments without politics being neglected. This is all fine. What I miss are plentiful quotations from the books of important historians. Apparently that is impossible. Very well, then readers must refer to the originals; either anthologies must be made, or students must buy paperback editions of the great authors. Tocqueville can be purchased very cheaply; Marx too; the finest description and analysis of the Roman Revolution, by Ronald Syme, is available in inexpensive editions. These must be used. The textbooks are all very well, but they cannot captivate the mind, cannot really stimulate the imagination. Only what is related at length is entertaining, stimulates questions, doubts, comparisons. The explosive seed of interest is contained within the detail. On top of this, the best historians were mostly good writers as well. The study of their works will at the same time develop a feeling for language, for style; an aim which I most certainly do not think should be neglected.

THE OBJECTION WILL be raised, where is the time for such reading coming from? Here I would like to introduce one of the freedoms that I envisage. It is not necessary for the young student to acquire an equal and equally superficial knowledge of all periods of European, or of human, history, in order speedily to forget it all again. The overall picture could well be quite a sketchy one with only a few areas filled in with greater detail, or one single area filled in with very great detail. History affords a series of neatly self-enclosed complexes. In classical antiquity, for

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example, there is the origin, rise, heyday and fall of Athenian democracy, the Peloponnesian War and its aftermath, the intellectual elements of the *Politeia,* naturally including tragedy, comedy and philosophy. Another example is precisely the Roman Revolution from the Gracchi to Augustus, and Cicero's letters and speeches are something like a compendium of politics on their own. To take a glance at modern times, anyone who has thoroughly studied the history of the French Revolution and the Empire together with all the effects of this complex on Europe and America, including the reactions against it, and who has read some of the contemporary documents, speeches, exchanges of correspondence, memoirs, and then a few great historical writers, even if only in modest extracts, knows once and for all what history is, how individuals, states, nations, social classes and parties behave in a crisis. Why should not six months or a whole year be devoted to one such complex of historical events at the cost of other areas, which could then be skimmed over? A sentence like "Napoleon III intervened in Mexico" means nothing to the young student, and almost nothing even if it is discussed for a few minutes. In order to make it even partially meaningful at least an hour would have to be devoted to conditions in Mexico prior to Louis Napoleon's intervention. Naturally the hour is not available, so the whole thing might as well be dropped. Another self-enclosed sequence of events with all those elements that constitute European politics—social classes, parties, economic interests, questions of hegemony and the framing of constitutions, the interaction between internal and external politics—would be the history of the German *Reich* from 1871 to 1919. This complex too would be worth six months or longer, during which time it must not, of course, be divorced from Europe as a whole but merely placed in the centre of the stage. Yet another would be Central Europe at the time of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, including the Thirty Years War and the Treaty of Westphalia. Anyone who has gone deeply into one such exemplary epoch will gain something from it; he will know what history was "until yesterday"; what it ought not to be tomorrow, because mankind can no longer afford the irrationality of its conventional power politics; he will know what it, unfortunately, still is.

Each of the special periods I have mentioned as examples presents the whole range of questions which the student of history may ask himself, those taken from recent or modern history in a more pronounced form because they involve more tightly organised societies and more differentiated thinking, and because the documentation is far more copious and direct. Was everything "bound to happen" as it did, or is there freedom in history, that is to say, could events conceivably or possibly have followed a different, a better path at such-and-such a time? Who, or what, prevented that path from being taken? What is the meaning of cause? Does causation exist in history in the sense in which it is still uncontested in mechanics or medicine? Is the substructure propounded by Marx—the interaction of the methods and forces of production, upon which everything else depends—a reality? In other words, putting it crudely, is everything in history mono-causal—or do we, rather, find a multiplicity of criss-crossing strivings, motives, centres of volition, which, in their effects and counter-effects, produce the surprising and unpredictable? This question can be discussed theoretically by devoting two or three hours to Karl Marx. Although one must naturally be familiar with Marx's theses, I should prefer a consideration of concrete facts.

Were the so-called "religious wars" really wars of religion? What else were they? What interests were intermingled with the dogmatic and ecclesiastical ones, or concealed behind them or expressed through them? Why did the co-existence of the denominations agreed in 1555 come to grief in Germany, and why did the one agreed in 1648 last? Or, again, why was the German Navy built up around 1900? Was this solely the outcome of the interests of heavy industry, the shipyards and the stock exchange? What attitude did the political parties adopt to these interests, what means of propaganda did they use? Were quite different ideas, quite different fantasies, longings, and stupidities also at work? Is it possible for a competitive arms race to have effects that were entirely unwanted, because what people do and think becomes entangled and confused with what other people think and fear? Is it possible to keep any control at all over what one starts? To what extent do ideological groups, governments, the holders of power remain faithful to their principles when they are in power, to what extent do they not and why not? What is "revolution"? Have there always been revolutions, periodically? To what

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extent has the concept of revolution, as reformulated in the early nineteenth century, influenced and changed the thing itself? Under what conditions do dictatorships and semi-dictatorships come into being? Why war? Are there unambiguously recognisable, rational causes for war, as used to be thought and as we had to learn with dreary monotony in respect of the First World War? Are there historical effects in relation to which the causes, or alleged causes, appear insignificant and totally inadequate? What part in history is played by mere error, misunderstanding, weakness, arrogance, stupidity? What part is played by those who used to be called "great men"?

In every senior class today there will be a few self-styled Marxists. They must be allowed to speak, though not to exercise a petty terror; and they should be questioned. They jeer at the statement of an old historian, "Men make history", and quite rightly. They see in leading individuals mere puppets of the dialectical class struggle, quite wrongly. For their part, they practise a cult of their own ideological heroes, Lenin, Mao, Castro, Che, that is every bit as pious as the devotion of the German bourgeois in Bismarck's empire to the paladins of Kaiser Wilhelm I, Bismarck, Moltke, and Roon. And this, again, not altogether wrongly, looked at objectively. For however one judges Lenin's character, and I cannot find it very amiable; however one judges the consequences of his personal influence on events, and I cannot find it very beneficent; it can certainly be demonstrated that he shifted the political axes, that without him the history of Russia would have taken a different turn, no one can say which, but different from the one it took as a result of his arrival at the Finland Station in St Petersburg at the crucial moment. The same is true of Adolf Hitler. It was no use in his own day, and is no use in retrospect, making him out to be a mere puppet of German capitalism or German militarism, especially since in political cunning and energy he far outdid all the groups who tried to make use of him. In short, the personal vigour, the individuality, that modifies destiny—this must be given its due in the discussion that takes place in the history class in those instances where the consequences of its emergence and intervention are undeniable, as is often the case. To insist on seeing these things as they are has nothing to do with any kind of hero-worship. Moreover, even if the "great men" of our own time, with a few exceptions, have been pretty revolting, the lives of leading individuals of the past have not been without their attractive, indeed often enchanting side, and they were also full of drama. It would be doing a disservice both to our students and to truth to suppress the role of the individual in history in the interest of some impersonal dogma. We have not freed ourselves from one stupidity in order blindly to fall victim to the opposite one.

BY PLACING SUCH QUESTIONS before the young mind, or stimulating it to ask them, we can gain its active participation. Merely to sit there, often half-asleep, sometimes listening to the teacher a bit, frequently looking at the clock, is not the right thing for the morning hours, which are intolerable without activity. Imagination needs stimulating, the thinking capacity demands exercise; and the history lesson is just as well suited for this as mathematics. It can very well be linked with learning a language, as the study of Latin used to be combined with the study of Roman history; the same thing could be done with a modern foreign language, or one's own. The system would be different, the end the same. All I mean is that nowadays teaching and learning are in danger of being buried under the question of what is to be taught, and learnt, and how. I sometimes have the impression that nowadays questions of method and organisation are distinctly over-rated at the expense of the substance.

There remain the ultimate questions, questions relating to what may be called the philosophy of history, which ought certainly to have a place in the history lesson. Are events repeated, can comparisons be drawn? "Repetition" in the precise sense of the word does not take place, but in a metaphorical sense it does, and comparisons may most certainly be drawn. As an historian I would never draw comparisons; in writing history they seem to me crude and inartistic. Yet history is always present and actual, can always be looked at in terms of the eternally human; comparisons with later periods, with the experiences of our own day, often force themselves upon us. The reader ought to notice this, we should not thrust it upon him. It is different at school; such things may well be pointed out to the young student—both the similarities and the differences. Linked with this is the question as to whether we can "learn from history." We could, if we went about it the right way; and it would be worth considering why, if this is possible, it has

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so rarely been done. How does the old belief in progress look now? Is it still valid? If so, in what way must its validity be restricted? Does history have a meaning, do good and evil exist? If so, is evil punished, and is mere failure or the excessive assumption of pride also punished? Can we rely on this punishment? Why do so many innocent people have to suffer with so few guilty? Is one epoch as good as another, "as close to God" (as Ranke put it)? Are we closer than the sixteenth century or further away? Are we entitled to condemn any form of society, feudalism, any form of government, religious absolutism, enlightened absolutism, the reactionary domination of Metternich, lock-stock-and-barrel, the way Immanuel Kant condemned the whole of the Middle Ages as an "incomprehensible aberration of the human spirit"? Ought we exclusively to laud the oppressed, the forever brutally vanquished opposition party, the peasants as opposed to the landowners, the democrats as opposed to the reactionaries, the Socialists as opposed to Bismarck (as the President of the German Federal Republic, Herr Heinemann, seems to recommend)? I am not totally in support of this viewpoint, but the important thing is not this particular viewpoint but the multiplicity of possible viewpoints. Infinite as is the material to be studied, so the number of questions it raises is also infinite.

I wish I were half my age, then I could start again where I was on the point of starting in spring 1933, when one day I had to leave Germany in the middle of the state examination, between the written and the oral sections. I should like to be a history teacher today. It is a difficult task, probably more difficult than it has ever been, but deeply worthwhile.

Kermit

I sometimes wonder if that is what Krishna meant
ELIOT, *"The Dry Salvages"*

I sometimes wonder what it was Kermit meant
the day he paced the floor of his furnished room,
his voice rising, his arms stabbing the air.

I wonder sometimes, recalling the rock music
and the socks on the floor, and the books on the unmade bed.
He talked and talked, asking rhetorical questions.

And I sometimes wonder what I possibly meant
in that cluttered twilight when I muttered "Yes."
He smiled triumphant. I asked if he had some water.

Kermit's gone, left for another school
and another room in another city I guess.
I sometimes wonder what the whole thing meant.

Stephen Miller

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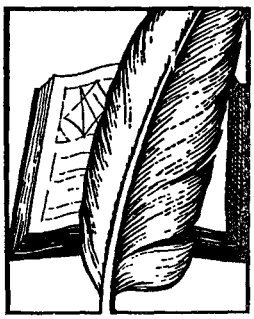

Column

LITERATURE has had many mythical homes, on Parnassus or in Bohemia, and the kind of lodgings it finds are often a measure of the respect which it enjoys in society. One asylum (a word which has a certain ambiguity in this context) which it once found in this country went by the name of Grub Street, and the vicissitudes suffered, both physically and metaphorically, by that locality are a good indication of the changes which have taken place in the status of men of letters during the last three hundred years. It was once the abode of scurrilous and belligerent hacks who unscrupulously prostituted what little talents they had in the service of any patron, party, or printer that thought it was worth while to employ them. For George Gissing, it became the home of unrecognised genius, struggling with adversity simply because its standards were too high for the philistine and commercial world by which it was surrounded. For J. C. Squire, in *The Grub Street Nights Entertainments*, it formed a meeting place, a kind of Savile or Garrick Club, in which sophisticated men of letters amused themselves and each other with their own frivolity and wit. One might say that Grub Street, as a metaphor, began as a slum and ended as a Hampstead Garden Suburb, as if the Ministry of Environment had been at work on it, and one finds it hard to say in which milieu literature flourished worst.

But Grub Street was once something more than a metaphor, and was a real place, a local habitation as well as a name. In his fascinating and absorbing book, *Grub Street, Studies in a Subculture* (Methuen £5·50), Dr Pat Rogers has tried to show, to my mind convincingly, that in the case at least of one great English poem, *The Dunciad*, it was as much the actual physical environment of Grub Street as its metaphorical associations which was the basis of the poem's inspiration; indeed, that without knowing what Grub Street was really like we cannot understand the poem and much of its strange beauty, at once comic and macabre, is lost upon us. Since the topography and ecology of Grub Street is a somewhat arcane subject, even to scholars, this is rather a daunting claim, but it seems to me that Dr Rogers has thoroughly made it out. In advancing it, he has not only contributed to our understanding of the poem but thrown a valuable light on the nature of poetry in general; at the same time, his book is so rich in suggestions that it tempts one almost irresistibly towards certain comparisons between the life of literature in the days of *The Dunciad* and in our own. Certainly it is a book which one would like to recommend unreservedly to lovers of either literature or of London, or, as in my own case, of both.

IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, then, Grub Street was, in the words of Johnson's Dictionary, "a street near Moorfields, much inhabitated by writers of small histories, dictionaries and temporary poems"; or, as *A Universal Etymological Dictionary* has it, "Grub Street, the name of a street in London inhabited by persons who wrote for hire, hence used for a paltry composition." It lay in Cripplegate, outside the old walls of the City but within its liberties (that is to say, its jurisdiction). It was, strictly speaking, a suburb of the metropolis, as N.W.1 was until very recently. Round the corner was Fore Street, in which Daniel Defoe was born, and Dr Rogers goes to some trouble to show that Defoe would qualify, both on local and other grounds, as a Dunce, in the sense in which Alexander Pope uses the word in *The Dunciad*. A few streets to the East lay the great lunatic asylum of Bedlam and this close association with madness adds a sinister, yet comic, touch to the image of the Grub Street hacks, just as the proximity of Newgate prison, to the south, adds a criminal one. Immediately to the west ran the great open sewer of the Fleet Ditch, London's *cloaca maxima*, which to madness and crime added the association of refuse and excrement, with the stench of which both *The Dunciad* itself and Swift's *Tale of a Tub* are impregnated.

Thus Grub Street, "the Cave of Poverty and Poetry", lay on the eastern fringe of an area which, stretching to Drury Lane and Covent Garden, was the home of the flotsam and jetsam of 18th-century London, of the abjectly poor, the outcast, the insane, the criminal and, not least, as if these were his natural colleagues and associates, the hack writer, who by his venality, his scurrility, his lack both of talent and integrity, so offended the Augustan spirit of Pope and Swift. But other touches, not less offensive in their eyes, though perhaps today they might almost be taken as a mark of recommendation, are required to complete the contemporary picture of Grub Street. For Moorfields, once a marsh and later a recreation ground, was a happy hunting ground for prostitutes of both sexes, the walk which divided it being traditionally reserved for homosexuals, so that when Pope in his *Further Account of the Condition of Edmund Curll* refers to "At the Bedstead and Bolster, a Musick-house in *Moorfields*, two Translators in a Bed together" he was suggesting something else as well as their poverty.

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Filth, ordure, poverty, sex, madness, crime—there is still one more element to be added, perhaps even more frightening to the Augustan satirists: civil disorder. In describing the endemic violence bred by the atrocious social conditions which prevailed in Grub Street, Dr Rogers draws heavily, and effectively, on Professor Rudé's admirable book, *The Mob in History*, and describes the repeated outbreaks of rioting, arson, street-fighting, destruction of property, of which Grub Street and its environs were so frequently the scene; even suggesting that in *The Dunciad* one may see a kind of premonition of the greatest of all eruptions of mob violence in London, the Gordon Riots of 1780, though Pope already had sufficient evidence before his eyes to justify his savage satire:

—Thus revive the Wits!
But murder first, and mince them all to bits . . .
Let standard-Authors, thus, like trophies borne
Appear more glorious as more hacked and torn. . . .
Leave not a foot of verse, a foot of stone
A Page, a Grave, that they can call their own. . . .
And while on Fame's triumphal Car they ride
Some Slave of mine be pinioned to their side.

Dr Rogers' emphasis on the darkness and savagery of Grub Street makes one feel surprised, at moments, to remember that the great goddess, the *Magna Mater*, chosen by Pope to preside over the empire of chaos and anarchy is the goddess of Dullness, and Dullness is the Deity whose triumph the end of *The Dunciad* celebrates. Yet Dullness had for Pope a significance which she does not have for us, who may feel that universal darkness, if and when it comes, will be the work of other hands. It is here, perhaps, that Dr Rogers' analysis is most illuminating. Why should Dullness, of all deities, preside over a realm of filth and poverty, madness and crime, sexuality and violence? The answer is, I think, that for Pope Dullness is precisely the deity which darkens men's sight, destroys their sense of the propriety and balance of things, obscures their feeling for the distinctions that exist in any properly ordered world, and for that very reason reduces life, society, literature, art to an indiscriminate assemblage of bits and pieces in which nothing is of more value than anything else, of refuse and rubbish such as flowed so densely and malodorously through the Fleet Ditch. For where else does Dullness reign supreme except where men no longer recognise that one thing is not the same as another, that evil is not the same as good, reason as unreason, love as sex? It is there that

Thy hand, great Anarch, lets the Curtain fall,
And universal Darkness buries all.

FORTUNATELY, Grub Street is no more. The Augustan satirists had something to do with killing its image and in 1830 even its name was lost, when it became Milton Street, which crosses the underground line from Moorgate to Aldersgate station. Yet somehow one feels that its spirit still survives; indeed, that in some respects it may perhaps be stronger and more flourishing than at any time in the intervening years.

Where would one find the descendants of Grub Street's original inhabitants if one were to look for them today? Of course, by now they would be very widely dispersed, not only throughout London and Great Britain but overseas, particularly in the United States. Some at least one would find where one would always have found them, near the Fleet Ditch. Where else does the Goddess of Dullness preside more triumphantly than in Miss Jean Rook's gossip column in the *Daily Express*. After reading Dr Rogers, it gives one a distinct historical *frisson* to remember that Shoe Lane stands

Nigh where Fleet Ditch *descends in Sable Streams*
To wash his sooty Naiads in the Thames

and Pope or Swift would certainly have seen a significance in its location. Of course one would have to look further afield than the Ditch, in television studios and publications offices scattered throughout London, where the children of the Dunces still carry with them a whiff of the infection which spread from Moorfields' festering streets; for Grub Street, dying, has preserved itself by invading precisely those areas of London from which the satirists hoped to exclude it. The only difference is that, where their fathers starved and dressed in rags and tatters, their children dress like diplomats and lunch at the White Tower. One would have to travel further, across the ocean to Manhattan, to find, in radical-chic editorial offices and apartments (for Grub Street was always Whig) Dullness still exercising her sway, in a city which in many respects almost exactly reproduces that sombre and flame-ridden atmosphere of violence, crime, sex, riot and garbage which pervades the pages of *The Dunciad*; and what else do those demonstrations, led by Dr Spock or Norman Mailer or Shirley Maclaine, remind one of but the procession of the Dunces through the streets of London, their leaden-winged goddess triumphant in her chariot, which Pope celebrates?

One ought not to underrate the power of Dullness; the goddess may have been under eclipse for many years and Dr Rogers writes of her as if she were dead, but in our own day her dread empire may be about to rise again, or may indeed have already risen.

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THE WINTER ISSUE of that admirable quarterly, *Survey*, is largely occupied by some of the papers read at an international conference held last December at Stanford University to discuss the question of "Literature and Politics in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe." Their common theme is the relation between Literature and Revolution, and for anyone who is interested in either subject they make absorbing reading; most of all they emphasise how extraordinarily complex that relationship is and what an almost obsessive part the idea of revolution has played in the imagination of writers during the last fifty years. *Survey* is concerned primarily with the East; but the same would hold good in the West. It could be said that in Revolution writers have found an idea with which to fill the void left vacant by the death of God.

But *Survey* also contains a different kind of document which springs out of one person's direct experience of how revolution affected the life of a great poet, Osip Mandelstam. His widow's memoirs of her husband, in two volumes, have already established themselves as one of the classical literary texts of our times, though as yet only one volume has been published in English. Neither volume however contains Mme Mandelstam's *Testament*, which Professor Leo Labedz has now printed in a translation from the Russian original published by the YMCA Press in Paris.

It is an intensely felt and intensely moving document which takes the form of a protest by Mme Mandelstam against the decision by which, in accordance with Soviet law, the rights in her husband's literary remains, fifteen years after his rehabilitation from the total oblivion to which he was condemned in the U.S.S.R., now revert to the Soviet state. By what right, asks Mme Mandelstam, and by what travesty of justice, does the Soviet state claim property in the works of a poet whom, in his lifetime, it persecuted, silenced, exiled, imprisoned and finally flung like a dog into a nameless grave? The injustice is all the greater because it is possible, even likely, that the proceeds of Mandelstam's literary estate may go to, of all people, the Soviet Union of Writers—precisely that institution which, in collaboration with the K.G.B., condemned Mandelstam to perpetual silence and, eventually, to his terrible death.

Mme Mandelstam's *Testament* ends with the following declaration, which I feel deserves quotation as testimony to the actual relation which subsists between the Soviet state and writers who lay claim to freedom of expression in the exercise of their profession:

> "I request the Future to assign the perpetual right to this inheritance, that is while the books are published and the poetry is read, to the people whom I will name in a special document. Let there always be 11 of them, in memory of Mandelstam's 11-line verse, and let the place of those who depart be taken by substitutes elected by those who remain.
>
> I entrust to this commission of heirs the unconditional disposal of the remains of the archive, publishing of books, reprinting of poetry, publication of unpublished material. But I beg this commission to protect this heritage from the state and to give in neither to its intimidation nor to its flattery. I have lived my life during a time when it was demanded from each of us that everything we did should be 'useful to the state.' I beg the members of this commission never to forget that within us, within the people, there is an overriding value, that we are not servants of the state, but the state is our servant, that poetry is addressed to people, to their living soul, and is no concern of the state except when the poet, defending his people or his art, himself addresses to the state an appeal or a reproach, as sometimes happens during enemy invasion. Freedom of thought, freedom of art, freedom of speech —these are sacred ideas as incontrovertible as the ideas of good and evil, as freedom of faith and worship. If a poet lives like everybody else, thinks, suffers, enjoys himself, talks with people and feels that his fate is inseparable from the fate of all people—who would dare to demand that his poetry should be 'useful to the state'? Why should the state declare itself the heir of a free man; and, by the way, what use is it to the state? All the more if the memory of this man lives in people's hearts and the state does everything to expunge it.
>
> That is why I beg the members of the commission, that is, those to whom I bequeath Mandelstam's inheritance, to do everything possible to preserve the memory of the dead man—for his satisfaction and theirs. Should my inheritance bring in any money, the commission should itself decide what to do with it. Fritter it away, or give it to people, or spend it for their own pleasure. But it should not set up any literary funds or deposits but rather try to spend this money in a simpler and more humane way, in memory of a man who loved life so much and was not allowed to live it. The state and its bureaucratic literature must on no account receive any of it. Please also remember that the murdered man is always stronger than the murderer, and a simple man is greater than the man who wishes to subjugate him.
>
> Such is my wish, and I hope that the Future to which I appeal will respect it, if only because I gave my life to safeguarding the work and the memory of the dead man."

R

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Three Poems

Wind and Absence

Down wind, down wind, a soft sweep of hours
Trawling in time. My pulse races into darkness.

Adrift, I draw your absence close about me;
Take the small ghosts of your hands to mine.

Your voice, your smile: such Son et Lumière.
My nerves conduct you round my floodlit bones.

Certain salt-water fools pester my eyes:
I stub them out with rough, dumb fingers.

The wind rehearses idle punishments,
Shaking a crush of unrecorded leaves.

A long-dead singer clears his ashen throat:
You creep his old, cold music into life.

Poems bite on their pains. Dismayed, I know
The lines are scored in poker-work: black fire.

The haunted room trembles at your insistency.
Small ghostly hands, allay the air's distress

As wind gathers, menacing our naked spaces
In dead languages of distance and rejection.

Peter Scupham

Chieko Climbs the Wind

Chieko, crazed beyond all use of language,
Makes signs to peewits and blue maggotpies.

Yellow along the hummocks ranged to break
The sea-wind's flick the fine pine-pollen lies.
In May's clear breeze the beach of long hours
shimmers.

Now seen between the pines, Chieko's gown,
Now vanished, flickers whitely. From white sand
Small mushrooms grow which, slowly bending
down,
I pick as in her wake I follow slowly:
For now, no longer woman, she'll have none
But maggotpies and peewits for companions.

Chieko flies, her wings of hair undone;
Into the morning sky, her favourite playground,
Chieko flies to dazzle the bright sun.

Takamura Kōtarō (1883-1956)
translated by Graeme Wilson

Fragments: 6 p.m. and after

(record of a failure)

1

Yes (how else?) it knows what to do,
the bright light blossoms into soldiers.

It seems we sit in these same chairs
each evening, watching the same thing . . . .

A tall priest booms from the street
behind glass; his great raincoat

hangs open; it is not, apparently, raining
nor does his flock observe the weather . . . .

Tonight, though, it got dark early.
Yesterday, some deaths occurred in Derry.

The day before, I am hazy about—
the precise number of bombs or soldiers.

The day before that, I forget.
We watched it together. My wife was tired.

2

A white room commits me to patience
who have never fought or known long anger.

My wife is expecting our first child.
It has begun to jump; we are both excited.

I could have stayed with her tonight,
not let the two doors close between us

just for this, the intricate enchantment,
urgent spider-craft, some web of meaning . . . .

I have torn up a poem about death—
it was not committed; O luxury of absolutes!

I love her, but some thirteen dead
must be important . . . I am here (how else?)

and "Literature" wrote Pound "is news which
stays news." The logos, the maker's word.

John Mole

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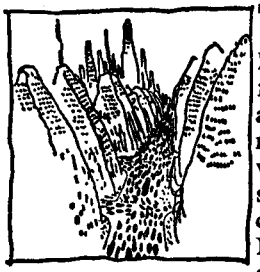
NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from New York

The American Crisis

Between Old Idealism & New Despair—By ANTHONY HARTLEY



THE SHOOTING of George Wallace is the latest puff of smoke from what Europeans are nervously coming to regard as the American volcano. For it might seem that, over the last decade, the towers of New York—so hopeful once for the immigrant and so resolute in their assertion of an exemplary way of life—had become a cornucopia from which there pour the more insoluble problems of the modern world: crime, urban decay, drug addiction, violence, and an environment ravaged by greed. For the European who depends on the United States for his security and also fears that at least some of these phenomena are liable to be exported by a powerful economy multiplying its own image throughout the industrialised world, it is a daunting spectacle.

It is also a confusing one. What on earth is happening in America? One's conclusion will depend on whom one talks to. The benign, prematurely-old gentleman one meets in a New York club speaks of "business values" and tells you with a gleam in his eye how he "got into" oil before the discovery of the Alaskan fields. His hirsute son existing in a hovel in Greenwich Village, or off the campus in Berkeley, on an allowance doled out by his father, will tell you that he is against "the System" and for "a liberated society." His amusements do not include reading—least of all history—any more than do those of his father, though he may meditate a sacred text or two: Fanon, Tolkien, or the prophet Gibran. The connecting link is perhaps Madison Avenue where the advertising executives let their whiskers and their bank accounts grow at the same time. They have realised that Liberation Pays, and, with them, the motley horde of publishers, television producers, writers, actors and journalists who compose "the media" and make such good copy for Tom Wolfe. They, indeed, are partly responsible for the confused impression any observer receives of contemporary America. The touch of the media, like an application of hormone weed-killer, causes new ideas to grow to a monstrous size and then to wither before yet another twist of fashion.

It is the difficulty of making a judgment on the *steadiness* of this society which must worry and even obsess anyone concerned with the role of America in international affairs. In Washington he perceives an administration which, Henry Kissinger's pyrotechnics apart, is steady to the point of boredom. In New York, in California, on the campuses, he is faced with an intelligentsia so frantically swinging as to induce delirium in themselves and nausea in the beholder. Nor are matters simplified by the prevailing masochism. To the uplift of public relations assuring the citizen that everything is for the best in the best of all possible IBMs respond the denunciations of contemporary prophets pouring the vials of their wrath over the various manifestations of that industrial civilisation which has been one of the most considerable creations of the American people. In the domain of foreign affairs the incessant self-flagellation leaves little time for realisation that, as great powers go, the United States has pursued (with one exception) rather successful and moderate policies since 1945. The wonders of technology in the Year 2000 have been replaced by the terrors of

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ecological imbalance. "The American myth", begins a book significantly entitled *A Populist Manifesto*, "is dying. Things are not getting better. Instead history seems deranged. We have lost our way."[1]

SUCH A MOOD might not seem altogether appropriate for the inhabitants of the richest and strongest country in the world, where the standard of living is still rising, and the pace of social advance only slowed down by the political process of obtaining the average citizen's consent to improvement. But for anyone who wishes to get some sense of the part to be played by the United States in world affairs it is important to understand the reasons for this apparent collapse of self-confidence. The future, after all, will depend, not so much on American power which is certain, as on the ability of Americans to use that power. It is this ability which is called in question by the present mood.

NO DOUBT, A MAJOR CLUE can be found in the words I have just quoted. There is no particular reason why, because "things are not getting better", one should assume that "history seems deranged." Most of human existence has been spent in conditions where things were not getting noticeably better, and quite a lot of it in conditions where things were getting noticeably worse. The assumption that, as far as progress is concerned, the sky's the limit and that there is always pie in the sky is not one that can be made about merely human history. But American optimism, barely interrupted by such events as the Civil War and the Depression, has in the past been too dynamic and unhistorical a creed to let itself be much affected by such considerations. It has been, moreover, oecumenical, profoundly convinced that what was good for America was good for the rest of mankind. At its most absurd this conviction led to Senator Kenneth Wherry of Nebraska vowing in 1940 that "With God's help, we will lift Shanghai up and up, ever up, until it is just like Kansas City. . . ." At its best, it led to the Marshall Plan and the most constructive side of post-War American foreign policy. The most successful features of American action abroad have been closely associated with this missionary impulse.

A good illustration of just how strong and how natural to the American mind this oecumenical optimism remains are the theories which grew up in the late 1960s around the growing economic phenomenon of the so-called "multi-national company." At a time when Gaullism seemed to have blocked the further development of supra-national institutions in the Western world, the multi-national company appeared to many internationally-minded members of the American policy-making élite as an example of private enterprise carrying on the good work which governments had abandoned. Brotherhood between nations would be furthered by brotherhood between businessmen, and executives of the multi-national companies could inscribe at the head of their account-books, like mediaeval Italian merchants, "In the name of God and of profit." This view of things failed to take into account *(1)* that the multi-national companies were, for the most part, not multi-national at all, but simply American firms employing Europeans in their subsidiaries; and *(2)* that, so far from setting an example to governments, they were creating serious and complicated problems which, if unsolved, could actually worsen the relations between states.

A positivist confidence in progress has a Protean ability to seize on any current phenomenon to prove its case, but the shock will be all the more severe when the facts appear to confute even the most resolute believer in the future. Those Americans—practically the whole of the policy-making élite—who, in the early '60s, had firmly believed in the radical improvement of the international environment suggested by such phrases as "nation-building" or "problem-solving", found themselves faced by the undoubted fact that history was not going their way in Viet Nam. Military failure is traditionally the most brutal of shocks for any governing class, and it is hardly surprising that figures whom one might once have admired (as Melbourne did Macaulay) for their implacable certainty about almost everything, began to display alarming signs of disarray symbolised by the "doubts" and impotence of Robert McNamara, the Hamlet of the Viet Nam war.

Moreover, their assurance was under attack from other directions than that of South-East Asia. By the late 1960s it had become clear that the confidence of the Kennedy era that domestic problems could be dealt with by determination and the allocation of sufficient money had been misplaced. The racial problem had transferred itself from the terrain of equal rights, where it was relatively soluble, to that of equal opportunities, where it was not. The cities had revealed that their political structure (or lack of structure) was as great an obstacle to social improvement as it had been in the days of Lincoln Steffens. "What stands in the way of dealing effectively with these

[1] *A Populist Manifesto: The Making of a New Majority*. By JACK NEWFIELD and JEFF GREENFIELD. Praeger, $5.95. p. 3.

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urban problems . . .", writes one authority, "is mainly the virtues of the American political system and the American character."[2] While this might seem a comforting reflection from the latitude of Cambridge, Mass., the effect of the urban rioting of the late '60s was nonetheless to shake the confidence of the élite in American political institutions—a development accompanied by the increasing currency of the phrase "New Politics." Even business, which, in the 1950s, had appeared to have redeemed and civilised itself after its failure at the time of the depression, was now seen as responsible for the destruction of nature and the creation of a soulless and artificial environment of work. Similarly, it was discovered that the huge institutions of higher education, the most prized creations of American positivism, were considered by some of their student inhabitants as imposing a routine of "systematic psychological and spiritual brutality" in order to form "highly skilled, and respectable automatons."[3] In a country where youth has always been endowed with an almost mystical significance, the pessimism of the young appeared especially portentous.

THUS, SINCE THE MID-'60s, many of America's most characteristic achievements have displayed a seamy side which had remained hidden until then. It was almost as if Americans had suddenly been called upon to meet the bill for advantages which they had long taken for granted. The economic expansion and higher standard of living of the 1950s did imply social distortions and a greater gap between wealth and poverty, and American political institutions were ill adapted to taking the corrective measures required. Economic growth and the mobility of labour needed by advanced industrial society brought with them social upheaval and the psychological strains attendant on rootlessness. The university—a monument to belief in the meliorative power of education—was insecurely based on an uneven and frequently decaying school system which sent streams of bewildered adolescents to wrestle with syllabuses for which they had little intellectual preparation and small inclination. The disintegration of the cities was only speeded up by the quickening of economic forces. The dissatisfaction of the Negro was only increased by the consciousness that he had attained equal legal rights, but could not aspire to equal economic privileges.

All this was no more than the natural result of accelerated social change outrunning any corresponding transformation in a system of central and local government, some parts of which seemed fixed in a sclerotic immobility. But, coming at the same time as an unsuccessful war, these domestic troubles have appeared as simply another sign that history has failed the United States, that America can no longer be, in Henry Luce's words, "the powerhouse from which the ideals spread throughout the world. . . ." Yet the whole tradition of American history was ranged against acceptance of the idea that the United States was no different from other countries.

"What we seek for our own people in a Great Society at home, we seek for all mankind"—this sentence from a speech made in 1965 by the American ambassador to the United Nations proclaims a secular ambition. If America were not exemplary, the standard-bearer of an oecumenical optimism, then what form could its claim to a determining role in world history take? Behind the evident loss of self-confidence on the part of the articulate élite in the United States today lies a sense that it is no longer sufficient for America to be simply itself in order to impress its image upon an admiring world. The ugly American has come to stay.

AMERICANS ARE A FAR MORE doctrinaire people than most of them believe. American "pragmatism" is something of a myth, but this is concealed by the fact that the well-springs of dogma flow from deep in a history which no one any longer reads. It is easy to recognise in the "community power" proposed as a nostrum for the cities the lineal descendant of the local democracy of New England. The *Populist Manifesto* recently published by two ex-followers of Robert Kennedy presumably has little in common with the aspirations of men such as Thomas Watson or "Sockless" Jerry Simpson, but the title proclaims clearly enough the desire for one of those movements, stemming from "ordinary people" and sweeping aside the principalities and powers of Washington and Wall Street, which have periodically marked American politics. It is not very likely that a sophisticated and New York-based programme could start any such seismic disturbance at the grass-roots, and a genuine "new populism" when it comes will probably contain elements highly unwelcome to Eastern liberals, but the attempt to revert to one of the atavistic sources of American history remains significant. At times, indeed, the rhetoric of Messrs Newfield and Greenfield does strike the authentic note of Mary Elizabeth Lease announcing that "the great common people of

[2] Edward Banfield, *The Unheavenly City* (Boston, 1968), p. 256.

[3] See Brad Cleaveland's *Letter to Undergraduates* (at Berkeley) in *The New Radicals: A Report with Documents*, edited by Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau (New York, 1966), pp. 216–230.

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this country are slaves, and monopoly is the master." It is to the same tradition that Mr John Connally appealed, dangerously enough, in his recent denunciation of European bankers who care little about the level of unemployment in the United States. The movement that has swept Senator McGovern to the forefront of the Democratic Party bears the populist stamp upon its programme, though the Senator is clearly no William Jennings Bryan.

In the domain of foreign affairs the revulsion against the rational attempt to come to terms with the facts of world power, which led to the global positivism of the Kennedy era, has also often taken the form of a reversion to earlier American attitudes. For instance, in a recent article, Thomas L. Hughes has looked forward to the rise of "trans-national politics"—a time when international relations will be conducted, to a considerable extent, outside the framework of state sovereignty and in terms of the various factions and interests in Western society, unwilling to allow themselves to be represented, as in the past, by governments:

> The old mythologies of state sovereignty will be less convincing than ever before. International institutions . . . will have to begin to come to terms with the newly destabilizing effects of factions flourishing in the West.[4]

Mr Hughes views this prospect as "pioneering and evocative" and shows little apprehension of the fragmentation of international politics which it would bring about. The point to note is that the content of this vision of the future is remarkably similar to the earlier American view of international relations as consisting ideally of direct contacts between peoples without the intermediaries of diplomats or governments.

ANOTHER REACTION TO international disappointment has been to take refuge in the vague moralising for which there are all too many precedents in the American tradition. After its flirtations in the corridors of power, part of the academic community now seems to have appointed itself the guardian of the purity of America's international morals.[5] A new clergy has grown up which, like the Transcendentalists, has its headquarters in New England and yields nothing to any Puritan predecessor in its ability to emit blasts of rotund exhortation. Dr Kingman Brewster, the President of Yale, who has some claim to the title of Arch-Community-Songster of the American university, in an article appallingly entitled "Reflections on our National Purpose," has given his version of the way his country's foreign policy should go:

> As we approach the bicentennial of the Republic, perhaps what we need most for 1976 is a resounding Declaration of International Interdependence. Maybe by 1987 we could then celebrate the two hundredth year of the Constitution of the United States with at least the beginning of global arrangements and institutions to safeguard the common defence and the general welfare of humanity everywhere. Then we would rediscover the sense of purpose, and once more know the satisfaction, of those who saved the peoples of the colonies by making them into a nation. We, in our turn, might save the peoples of nations by making them into a world community capable of survival.[6]

This might seem a fairly ambitious programme for a writer who has been declaring a few pages earlier that America "can neither escape nor control the rest of the world." But the interesting thing about Dr Brewster's article is that it represents in a peculiarly pure form that "legalistic-moralistic approach to international problems" which George Kennan denounced twenty years ago as the most serious fault in the history of American "policy-formulation."[7] Rejecting the global policies of the Kennedy administration and repelled by the *ad hoc* power-politics of Dr Kissinger's diplomacy, American academics appear to be slipping back to the traditional course of solving every problem by the adoption of a high moral line. The trouble is, not merely that problems are recalcitrant to such treatment, but also that a foreign policy based on such lofty principles must find some difficulty in making contact with other, less regenerate diplomacies. Future attempts to produce a purely moral American foreign policy will run up against the same impossibility of keeping clean hands in a dirty world as was the case in the past. The alternative to soiling one's principles in the real world of nations is isolation —the isolation which allowed the United States, before 1941, to derive satisfaction from the measurement of other people's defects with its own moral yardstick.

IT IS, NO DOUBT, a dim recognition of the fact that a moral stance of the kind the new clergy desire for the United States would be equivalent to isolation which has led to distinctions such as that drawn by Senator Fulbright between *America as an international power* and *America as a domestic society*. It is clear that the Senator considers the one bad and the other good, and there is a suggestion in some of his

[4] "Whose Century?" in *Foreign Affairs*, April 1972.
[5] It has also arrogated to itself another function: that of interpreter of, and commentator on, the views of "Youth" which it relays to the world outside the campus—much as a witch-doctor might pass on the reactions of the sacred crocodiles.
[6] *Foreign Affairs*, April 1972.
[7] *American Diplomacy 1900–1950* (1952), p. 95.

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statements that he would expect the European allies of the United States to take the same view:

> It really seems to me the stability of the United States at the moment—or its instability—is a much greater hazard to the future of Europe than a Russian invasion.[8]

Priority, it would seem, must be given to restoring the exemplary character of the United States, and, from such a restoration, not only America will gain. In the words of a recent preacher at the White House America must "recharge its spiritual batteries."

It is possible to view with sympathy this yearning for a pristine cleanness. But the retreat to morality in isolation heralded by the polysyllabic sermons of the new academic clergy will hardly solve the problems of the world power which America possesses and is bound to use imperfectly. The United States cannot play the part of Christ in Dostoevsky's parable of the dilemma of power. It must do its best with the role of the Grand Inquisitor. Indeed, an instinctive reversion to the past traditions of the United States—whether a new populism or a new transcendentalism—is hardly likely to answer any of the necessities of 1972, and this is peculiarly true in foreign affairs. In the first half of the twentieth century, for better or for worse, the United States crossed a bridge to wider responsibility, and there can be no going back to a world in which there were no "entangling alliances."

AT THE OPPOSITE EXTREME from the moralising of Dr Brewster and his like is the practical power politics at present being carried on with a high degree of efficiency by President Nixon and Dr Kissinger. The distinguishing features of the foreign policy of the Nixon/Kissinger conjuncture can be defined as follows:

(1) A high degree of centralisation in execution, and the virtual elimination of the plural decision-making which has usually bedevilled American foreign policy. *(2)* A degree of secrecy in operation hardly achieved by any other American administration in time of peace ("time of peace" in the legal sense of the phrase). *(3)* A freedom from ideological prepossessions and even from sentimental prejudices in favour of allies which has allowed the administration to consider international politices with a chillier eye than was the case hitherto.

Under the auspices of Dr Kissinger American policy has given the impression of regarding the world as a chess-board where, in words that were originally written about de Gaulle, "no friendship can arise between the knight that is moved and the hand that moves it." And it was perhaps a consciousness of this lowered temperature which produced Japan's violent reaction to Mr Nixon's approaches to Peking and the intensity of European annoyance over the economic and monetary measures of 15 August 1971.

THAT SUCH A POLICY should have been put into practice at this moment of American history is significant. Quite apart from the practical situation of the United States which found itself restricted in its freedom of manoeuvre and compelled to seize every occasion to enlarge its scope for effective action, the *Machtpolitik* carried on by Dr Kissinger was also the inevitable result of disillusionment with the positivistic optimism of the early 1960s. Since American foreign policy had traditionally been based on an attempt to read American meaning into the surrounding world, the apparent failure of that attempt—the assumed collapse of global positivism—left the international scene essentially meaningless. Instead of the Nation States, which are the units of international affairs, being assigned a role in various forms of ideal order, they were to be considered on an individual basis without respect to any general view of the world. It was as if the twine securing a bundle of sticks had broken, leaving the firewood scattered on the ground. International politics was to be the mere aggregate of all the states engaged in it—states which could be distinguished and balanced against each other in terms of their power and weakness, but to which no moral qualities could be assigned. For the purpose of the balance allies and opponents were equivalent, and intentions did not matter provided that they could be weighed. The view of the world which this implies has been made explicit by President Nixon in an interview to *Time* (3 January 1972):

> "... I think it will be a safer world and a better world if we have a strong, healthy United States, Europe, Soviet Union, China, Japan, each balancing the other, not playing one against the other, an even balance. ..."

This theory of international relations (which, incidentally, seems rather similar to that of the authors of *A Populist Manifesto*—in so far as they have one at all) would mean, in fact, not so much one balance of power as a constant recreation of new systems out of an endlessly shifting kaleidoscope of states. It is a diplomat's paradise, but a politician's nightmare. Its mode

[8] Taken literally, this statement is circular. American instability threatens Europe with the possibility of the United States becoming an unreliable ally in general, and, in particular, removing its troops from Europe—whereupon there might be a threat of Russian invasion. To prevent this sequence of events one must, therefore, reduce the numbers of American troops in Europe!

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of operation—centralisation and secrecy—is also significantly different from what has usually been regarded by Americans as the democratic method of managing foreign policy.

Whatever may be thought of the feasibility of such a concept of international relations—and ages of power politics have, in the past, followed periods of ideological division—it is interesting to note how completely it contradicts the view held by the new clergy of the campuses. It is almost as though thinking about American foreign policy were divided into those who had decided to be "good" and those who had decided to be "clever." Some of these oppositions can be listed:

Campus moralists	*Nixon/Kissinger*
Idealism.	*Realpolitik.*
Democratic ideology.	*Ideological neutrality vis-à-vis other countries.*
International community based on cooperation.	*Balance of power.*
Juridical, monetary and economic international structures.	*Power politics based on powerful individual states.*
Democratic control and public discussion of policy.	*Secrecy and centralisation of diplomacy.*

What seems to have happened as a result of the Viet Nam War is that the elements of moral judgment and power politics, which had always been present in American foreign policy, have become dissociated. And this involves, on the part of the moralists, an increasingly tangential relationship to the real world, and, on the part of the exponents of power politics, an abandonment of the attempt to build international structures corresponding to America's own liberal ideology and the image of themselves held by the American people.

In the case of the moralists the price to be paid for this dissociation is obvious. At worst they are condemned to a diet of hot air, at best to a statuesque representation of the Ideal which may or may not affect events. The defects of the Nixon/Kissinger view need more discussion. After all, the Nixon administration has succeeded in fighting its way out of the corner in which it found itself in January 1969. Its diplomacy has been inordinately successful. By and large, its calculations have come off. The latest of them—the calculation that the Soviet Union would not react strongly to the mining of North Vietnamese ports—is only the most striking instance. Nevertheless, the policy does raise a number of questions which would seem to cast doubt on its viability in the long run as far as the United States itself is concerned.[9]

1 Firstly, can the United States conduct over a long period the delicate diplomacy required by a constantly shifting balance of power? The Nixon-Kissinger conjecture is an exceptional phenomenon, and, though it may continue for another four years, will there not be a tendency thereafter for the pluralism and the publicity which have usually attended the making of American foreign policy to reassert themselves? If so, then the presidential player of international chess will be gravely handicapped in comparison with his opponents.

2 Can the American people and élite be induced to support a type of foreign policy which has no obvious consonance with the domestic ideals of the United States, and whose execution must run counter to cherished political habits? It is all very well to say, with Dr Brewster, that the young do not "believe it is either possible or desirable for America to try to keep the peace everywhere in the world, let alone to try to impose its own political and economic system on others"; but the opposition on the campuses to a régime like that of the Greek colonels, the agitation in favour of Bangladesh, the desire to help underdeveloped countries—all these things are still the products of a secular American optimism which sees the world in its own image and passes moral judgment upon it. Such utterances of oecumenical America are inevitably somewhat muted at the moment. Yet, as self-confidence returns, they will be heard more loudly, springing as they do from a deep conviction that the American way of life has far more than local significance. Will not moral purpose come once again to be a necessary ingredient of American foreign policy, as it has been in the past? And can Americans accept a self-denying ordinance that inhibits the application of their own ideology to foreign affairs?

3 Thirdly, ought the United States to take a view of foreign policy which, in effect, would mean disregarding its own considerable achievement in encouraging the creation of new structures in international politics prior to 1964? It would be paradoxical, for instance, if, just as the declared American policy of encouraging European integration had attained its greatest success with the enlargement of the European Economic Community (EEC), Washington ceased to attach

[9] It could also be objected that it is not an advantageous policy externally and is one which will produce an international system so complex as to be bound to break down. But I cannot go into the more general international consequences of the Nixon/Kissinger policy here.

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importance to this result. And there is little doubt that the policy of furthering permanent arrangements between liberal, industrialised societies, of which support for the European Economic Community formed part, would be seriously damaged by a view of international politics which regarded the United States, Japan and Europe as so many counters in the game of power politics—to be balanced off, if need be, against one another. This question is related to the first one posed above. For a world conjuncture unsupported by permanent structures and without the ambition to develop them would be one of exceptional fluidity, difficult and even perilous to manage.

WHAT I AM SUGGESTING HERE is that the Nixon/Kissinger view of international affairs may prove, in the long run, unviable and unsatisfying. There would be danger for the United States in too wide a gap between moral aspiration and the practice of foreign policy—a danger of faltering direction and sudden reversals of course. If one accepts this, and also that mere moral sentiment is not enough, then some other principle must be sought on which to base America's international action.

At this point common sense would indicate that guidance can only be found in a critical examination of past American policy, its successes and failures. *Reinforce success, cut failure*—this would seem to be the obvious recipe for anyone seeking to reduce American commitments abroad. And it so happens that, in this respect, it is possible to make a generalisation which is more valid than most. Since 1945, it can be said that, with some exceptions, the United States has enjoyed success in its dealings with advanced industrial societies and suffered failure and frustration in its relations with the Third World.

The Marshall Plan and NATO, economic aid to Japan and the Japanese Security Treaty—these were measures which produced real results in the shape of continued American influence and increased stability for the countries or area concerned. They were also measures not unworthy of, or inconsistent with, American idealism. In them idealism and a just sense of the national interest were mixed. In fact, Western Europe and Japan have been the pillars of American foreign policy for twenty-five years, and it may be surmised (*pace* Senator Mansfield) that Americans have received their money's worth from these relationships in terms of extended power and a stable economic and political partnership with prospering allies. No doubt the United States should moderate an appetite for global commitments which, in the days of the Kennedy administration, appeared inordinate. But it would be idiotic to ignore the obvious fact—obvious to anyone with a sense of history—that much of American foreign policy has been a success story, and a success story, moreover, which is a monument to generosity.

EUROPEAN FRIENDS of the United States might, therefore, hope that Americans will be prepared to accept and build upon their own previous achievements, and that those who, like George Ball, contend that American foreign policy has had a good deal to its credit will be heard. There is urgent need to reknit a continuity dissolved by the Viet Nam War. For that, however, some recovery from the present mood of melancholy and masochism will be needed. "By so much as the people of the United States are more hopeful", wrote Bryce comparing Americans with Europeans, "by that much are they more healthy." Guilt is an emotion which leads straight to impotence, and too prolonged a searching of hearts is liable to arouse derision rather than respect in the onlooker. It is fashionable to pay tribute to the strenuous wrestlings with conscience at present proceeding in the United States, but little enough in the way of solid ideas has emerged from them. Neither the guilt which denounces as immoral the most characteristic American creations, nor the nostalgia which seeks solutions in the half-remembered experience of earlier American history, can provide guidance appropriate to "the state of man in the days of his pilgrimage", as the most eloquent of English divines once put it.

The introduction of a theological note here is not accidental. The remedy for many of the uncertainties at present haunting the American conscience lies in a greater appreciation of the more profound lessons of history. Such a deepening of the debate would bring with it some recognition of the necessary imperfection attending the putting of ideals into practice. Because a country aims at great things, it does not follow that it can realise them. But because it does not realise them, that is no reason why it should not continue to aim at them. American foreign policy was conceived on an ambitious scale by the élite which has controlled it. It has met with the disappointment of those ambitions. But that does not imply either that the ambitions were bad in themselves—the thing that is striking about the lapidary rationalisation of foreign policy under the Kennedy administration is its idealism and, to a certain extent, its altruism—or that Americans should now resign themselves to having no ambitions at all.

Between the cant of the moralists and the sinuous manoeuvres of power-politics there is

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another path—that usually trodden by man in history—which leads to acceptance both of the real and the ideal as well as of the irony engendered by their mingling. The transition from the confidence in the future of a nation standing at the peak of its power to the conviction that history has failed it is a painful experience of which there are numerous examples in the past. But recovery follows the throwing-off of despondency, and, in any case, the identification of morality with success is a vulgar way of looking at history. It will do Americans no harm if, while still believing (correctly) that they have "something to offer" the world, they should come to realise that many peoples have thought the same at one time or another, and that there is nothing special about either their aspirations or their present disillusionment. What is unexampled is the power they hold to affect a world delicately balanced between order and chaos. An attack of nerves in Washington is felt as pain in half-a-dozen other capitals, and bad decisions of American policy pierce through and through an international organism exquisitely sensible to such pangs. Thus, even if Americans decided to abandon their ambitions, their duty to others would still remain.

FOR THAT REASON Europeans who care for the United States have a right to comment upon the present American crisis of self-confidence and a right to be heard when they ask whether self-criticism is not in some danger of becoming self-destruction. But then, an American might retort, can they not show that confidence in the United States which they are asking Americans to regain?

The question is a fair one, but the only possible answer is that it would be blindness to conceal from ourselves that at the moment the United States is traversing a crisis. However much we believe in the resilience and good sense of the American people, however much we appreciate its idealism and understand its anguish, we cannot help to resolve its dilemma. What we can do is to proclaim the value of its past achievements and the lasting quality of the ideals that informed them in the hope that Americans may come to see themselves as others see them—not varying from snowy white to pitch black, but in the half-tones of humanity where light predominates.

In a Green Grave

Recollections of Louis MacNeice — By DAN DAVIN

THE FATE OF SOME, especially if young, provincial and eager, is always to arrive too late. The mode has changed, the stars are in a different house, laughter is in another room. The Nazis have changed Berlin; in Italy the trains are on time, those with dangerous thoughts are doing time. The absinthe drinkers have left Paris to the tourists and Pernod; the cubists are merely point three repeating; dada has gone gaga; the vortex has died down, leaving a huguenot and anguished nausea. The Depression has cured the hangovers. In London, the berries of Gordon Square are brown, and only a snicker of Strachey echoes, lingering like a Cheshire sneer. There is no more early Huxley, no more early Waugh. Poetry is punctured by pylons, and pronounced about from Cambridge pulpits. The 17th century has returned, by courtesy of Vico, Marx and Freud; and in the civil war of letters the roundheads of the left are riding down the aesthetes with their long, essenced hair. It is closing time in the gardens of the west.

Or so it seemed to me, arriving too late in Balliol, three years before the war, those same dun, oxen years which MacNeice corralled within the months of his *Autumn Journal*. In Oxford, as elsewhere, the poetry and the fantasy were in retreat before politics; unless, at twenty-three, I was too old and too young to find them, too much an outsider. The earnestness, left and right, of political Balliol might not be surprising, though that Edward Heath should lead those few of its many conservatives who knew they were conservative was a special sign. But where were the poets? Balliol had none. At Merton which had step-mothered Eliot and forborne with MacNeice there was only Blunden. MacNeice was the one poet of more or less my own generation for whom I much cared. His feeling felt real. Curb and snaffle he had, but there

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was a real horse under him. For me the others, hierophants of a revolution that smelt of wax candles, anglican, the sweat of highbrows, were future conformists creating an alibi, an elsewhere they could some day cite as an authority for disillusion, psychopomps of the *déja vu* in the passage rites of the *passé*.

Even so, they too had gone their ways and were now bell-wethers in London, town-criers of all power to their elbows and the People. Only choirboys sang now in the roof-trees where Auden and Lewis and Spender had lately, wise thrushlings, sung their songs twice over. MacNeice had gone, too, though in another direction and under other directions. There was a steel rain in Spain and the weather was certain to spread. When *Autumn Journal* appeared, in 1939, the impending *Untergang* was not Stop Press, and I was filling my mind's valise, soon to become a military one, for a short journey to a grave in France.

The journey, as it turned out, was not short or to France but to Greece and Crete and Alamein and Italy and other assignations; though not, the bullets finding an outer and not a bull, with death. When I returned, six years after, many of my friends were dead, and it was late in the day to be making new ones. I had decided that to live was to write, but that to earn a living by writing was not to write well. A double life was to be a solution; poacher by night and gamekeeper by day, I became a publisher.

In the profession of midwife it is as well to like parents as much as babies. And I liked the scholars who wrote the books we published. But, exotics though they often were, they were not primarily writers. They wrote to expound, to elucidate. Their muses were their servants, not their mistresses. They were not writer's writers. The poacher hankered after the company of his kind, the pursuit in midnight coverts of meaning that had to be stalked, netted for, ferreted for, a quarry not known till it was brought down.

So I was often in nocturnal London, where all the game was funeral game. In between the hunt for words and themes, I talked in pubs with others of the trade, in the Lamb, the Wheatsheaf, the Bricklayer's Arms, the Black Horse and, when the fees and writers migrated to the BBC, in the Stag's Head, the Dover Castle and the George. It was in the Stag, late in 1948, that Jack Dillon—in due time to become the Devlin of *Autumn Sequel*—introduced me to MacNeice.

There was no instant exchange of liking, no immediate synapsis. He was wary of new men. I was a stranger, an ex-soldier marked by a different background and enveloped by a nimbus of different memories. I was an antipodean, a topsy-turvy man; an Irishman who was not of Ireland; an apostate, but from a faith that was not the faith of MacNeice's recent fathers—to use Bertie Rodgers' distinction, a Catholic agnostic, not a Protestant agnostic. I was also a publisher and therefore suspect, though a possible prospect, someone to be treated gingerly.

To me he seemed remote, with an emanation of disdain. He was secure in his own bar and among his own friends, requiring proof that someone he didn't know already was worth knowing, all but supercilious. The guarded eyes machicolated above the cheekbones looked down a long nose. The wry mouth, with its portcullis of long teeth and burglar's underlip, seemed to give a rictus rather than smile, and the laugh sounded like a civil sneer.

We met again, often enough, over the next few months, because we had friends in common. But when we talked it was, as it were, through interpreters, distanced by formal courtesy and protocol. Meanwhile, in 1949, I had been to Dublin. I came back with a plan for a collection of articles on Ireland, a book that would transcend the fission of its subject, and display the real order which kept the dance of electrons contained. MacNeice and Bertie Rodgers seemed the obvious editors. Both men of Ulster, it was true. But MacNeice's family was from Connemara and he had a Connaught peasant's face, a face I had often seen look up from the spade in Southland's transplanted Galway; and his name was old Irish, a name that went back to Conchobar and Deirdre and Naoise. In his envy of men of action and of the intransigence of his own countrymen he had in mind and understanding, if not in sympathy, the uncompromising obstinacy of the IRA gunman as well as that of the Orange Order. Among his friends were dyed in the wool wearers of the sash their fathers wore, as well as old republican fighters like Paedar O'Donnell. He had called Maud Gonne a "jumble of opposites" but he too held within himself, though buttoned, those fell opposed points. The name of Ireland, the whole of Ireland, rang in his ears "Like a bell in an under water belfry"; but, "educated and domiciled in England", and ruefully glad of it, he knew the sound of the bell was muted. And its music, though disjunctive undersea, was a music to which both sides might listen.

Bertie, too, was an Ulsterman: but one who was later to place proleptically a bunch of beget-me-nots on the empty grave of Paisley and to write:

> *I like his people and I like his guts*
> *But I dislike his gods who always end*
> *In gunplay.*

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They both had the freedom of Dublin as well as of Belfast and were trusted in these places where trust was not lightly given. Neutrality alone would not have been enough—only pigs could be in the middle—but love was recognised, like poetry. These were their passports, north and south. Their visas were their verses.

In the middle of June that year they were to come to Oxford to discuss my tentative proposals. The afternoon passed and there was no sign of them, a portent that was not for years yet to be brought home to me, any more than the significance of that day's later sequel. About nine o'clock Bertie rang. Would I join them in the George bar? I flushed them under the window, on the red upholstery, the two of them, and Dylan Thomas. They had come from the other George in London, had drunk but not eaten in the train, and had had a few more jars in Oxford before Bertie nerved himself to ring. They were all three very tight: Dylan boisterous, Bertie portentously grave, and Louis' usual vigilant taciturnity betrayed by the fixture of his smile.

Bertie's awareness of others was a mobile force: it made advances to skirmish or reconnoitre, though it could sometimes ambush. And he had a strong sense of social punctilio, much as a frequent duellist must know the rules, or an old army lag Queen's Regs. He sensed that I wasn't angry at the broken appointment, but nonetheless felt that protocol required apologies and there would be subtraction from my role and dignity if they were not forthcoming. So, with charm, he solicited a forgiveness already given, and known by him to be given.

Louis was not less aware of others than Bertie. But he looked down and out from the crenellations of his dark tower, noted that I was uneasy, probably guessed that it came from the imbalance of our alcohol, and allowed me to infer all this not from any proffered explanation but by calling to the barman to bring me a pint, watching my progress with it, and quickly ordering up another.

How I might feel was indifferent to Dylan, more exhilarated than the other two, as was his nature. He knew that he could quickly merlinise me. I was simply an interruption to be accorded a minimum and perfunctory pause, or to be exploited for timing and audience. We began talking of Hemingway, how the great marlin of his vanity had played him at the end of his own rod, until he became the original American Old Man of the Me, and brought himself to believe that he was the gamest fisherman in all the sea of letters, and the biggest fish in that sea.

The sign of the fish led to Christianity, and Dylan launched on a parody of a story about the Crucifixion, Hemingway its close-lipped Christ. Delighted with his own virtuosity and our delight he then extemporised a Crucifixion poem by Eliot, *questo il miglior padre,* Golgothic and Gongorian. A parody of Auden came next, and Christ was a young man, an ephebe brainchild of God clinically bleeding, passionately anaemic, a Malcolm Muggeridge made man. Day Lewis was nailed next, a civilised saviour, and then came Spender, beaming redemption with upturned eyes and down-beat verse, the feet very long.

I LISTENED and laughed, and waited for what I felt Dylan would not be able to resist. He wasn't, and now it was a baroque Irish Bertie who agonised on a cross of tanglewood puns which had somehow become a pulpit as well as a poem. Louis laughed from Parnassus at Bertie so accurately pierced and spreadeagled on his Calvary. Bertie brooded into his pint, amused and mortified, and waiting. And now it was Louis' turn, Apollonian. The water that the Roman spear released from his side was a bloody flux of all the world, and all things flowed, in that sinuous smoke-wreathed terza rima, where metaphor slides into metaphor, determining meaning, carrying it like flotsam. Christ became a phoenix burning on Heraclitean fire, and then a Tophet, a top hat of fire, out of which Dylan juggled the rabbits of the one and the many.

When he had finished, it was Bertie's turn to laugh, and I laughed too, Barabbas the publisher. Louis looked down his long nose in rueful acknowledgement of the Welsh wizard and grinned at the three of us.

By now time was called on Calvary, and the torches were put out. We took a taxi to my place, carrying bottles. My wife, adept in men and poets, had the table set and a chicken cooked. There was wine, and coffee afterwards, and more to drink. A couple of bottles later, Dylan had gone uncharacteristically to bed; but Louis and Bertie wanted to see Oxford in the dawn and Louis was convinced it would be a splendid time to discuss with Ernest Stahl, Aloys of *Autumn Sequel,* certain points in the Second Part of Goethe's *Faust,* which Louis was translating for the BBC.

Next day they did not feel disposed, when they surfaced, for talk about our book, and besides there were programmes in London.

And so to London and down the ever-moving
Stairs
Where a warm wind blows the bodies of men
together
And blows apart their complexes and cares.

In that London we had many other meetings. But there persisted between Louis and

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myself that sense of distance, a distance rather than a hostility, a feeling of a tower guarded, sentries not dismissed, a truce not trusted. You could say, I suppose, that among groups of people, or at parties, Louis was not wholly there. He had a presence rather than was present. He was not a dominant, but you knew he was there at the very moment you were feeling he was not. There were times when he seemed to be a dream walking, though he was never the dream of that song. Or perhaps his was the concentration not of the sleep-walker but of the funambulist. You do not interrupt such a walker in the middle of his rope. He is entitled, intent over his Niagara, to the *pas seul* of his narrow, perilous freedom.

And he himself realised that there was always an intention beyond his attention, that his closeness exceeded the merely social.

So those who carry this birthright and this burden
Regardless of all else must always listen
On the odd chance some fact or person or phantom
Might tell them what they want, might burst the cordon
Which isolates them from their innermost vision.

LATE IN 1949 he went to Athens as Director of the British Institute and I did not see him till the March of 1952 when he and Bertie came again to Oxford, this time uncompanioned by Silenus, and sober. We reached what seemed to be a firm plan for the book, and I was off to New York the following day.

It changed again and again, as the years passed, this plan of ours. Defaulters came and went, and from the margins new ideas infiltrated into the room of the old. It was a palimpsest, the draft of a dual poem—so much of whose verse stayed blank—and the two poets were merciless in their meddling and muddling towards perfection. But even at an early stage I began to worry that nothing would ever be finished unless a stability of intention were imposed. In October that year I asked for a consultation which I was determined would be a confrontation.

We met at Oddenino's, still a place then, but now only a diminishing echo, a name written in remembered wine. It was a burgundy we drank as we ate and there was a great deal done of both. At coffee I made an attempt to pin down my dragonflies. They easily eluded me, taking off into shimmering flights of words. If we decided anything I do not remember. The only note I could afterwards decipher suggests that nothing was said, in a business sense, to be worth remembering. The egos of poets, like the livers of Strasbourg geese, are specialised and overfeeding produces poetry or pâté. It is my memory's weak custody of the poetry that I regret.

When the waiters closed in on us, the pubs outside were closed, and we were dry from drinking. But Bertie knew an Italian club in Soho. We had become grave and responsible men of business, practical men. It was obviously necessary that we should continue our still inchoate discussion over a drink. We would have only a jar or two and go our ways. For I was to be taken that night by a friend to Gielgud's *Romeo and Juliet;* a friend of Bertie's had tickets for *Porgy and Bess;* and Louis and Hedli were to go to a film of Everest whether because it was there or because he had written the script. We nodded at one another, with sage approval of our sobriety and restraint, getting our satisfaction from these virtues in advance of displaying them.

In those days I had a hard head and a good liver, which is perhaps why I have neither now. But the copious Chianti eventually got to me and released the black Irish anger normally contained. For the hundredth time, it suddenly seemed, Bertie was explaining Ireland to me. I was being treated like a publisher and a sassenach. Was I not myself a poet and an Irishman? I rebelled, a genetic and national inveteracy. I had a better claim to speak, I taunted. He was only presbyterian plantation Irish, little better than a Scotsman, and a lowlander at that. Bertie's brown eyes enlarged with offence and anger. But, non-practising parson though he was, he was no Paisley but a man of peace. He got up in prudent dudgeon and departed.

Louis, always a *tête dure,* was laughing through the smoke of his Sweet Afton cigarette. But when a third leaves in anger it is wise for the remaining two to go elsewhere. Besides, the pubs were now open. We went to the nearby Mooney's and drank draught guinness, talking of one of Louis' passionate preoccupations, Rugby football. But I had a preoccupation of my own. My little luxury of rage was too rare to be thrown away so soon, even though Bertie's going had given it a temporary check. The bottle was still half full, the cork in the fireplace.

I remembered the story of the set-to between Louis and the swashbuckling Roy Campbell. Louis had reproached Campbell in some pub or other for having struck a poet, a man weaker than himself. "It was only a bit of pat, like this", Campbell had replied, tapping Louis lightly. "I don't believe you", Louis said. "I think it was a real swipe, like this." And he had slapped Campbell's face, hard.

Louis, then, was a man of his hands, more suitable for abuse than Bertie, no fighter with

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his fists. He was the target I needed. He too was a black Ulster Protestant, I told him. And what was there to choose between a black presbyterian and a black anglican? Weren't they both orange? Wasn't his father a bishop, with a diocese of acres but not of souls? Wasn't he himself "banned for ever from the candles of the Irish poor"? But Louis, remembering perhaps how his father had refused to sign the 1912 Covenant, only gave his lopsided smile. I could not get behind the guard of his good humour. And, as I gave up groping for shrewder insults, time—not the publican's time for once—suddenly arrested us, and we remembered we had our theatres to go to. My anger had burnt out, Louis was affable to the embarrassment in my apologies, and we went our ways.

I did not get to my theatre and Gielgud and Juliet had to die without me. Bertie too was ordered to bed when he got home and snored while Porgy sang to Bess. Only Louis, tenacious of purpose, got as far as Everest, though he slept before the peak.

IT WAS A YEAR before we met again. Louis had come to Oxford on that visit commemorated in *Autumn Sequel*, where "the years like small dun oxen crash the ford." It was October, when Oxford "seems all dead stone (which hath many a Fellow)." The visit was dedicated to the piety of other and older friendships—Professor Dodds (Boyce of the poem) and Ernest Stahl being principal, "two soft-spoken men in a firelit room." For, slow to make friends, Louis was even slower to relinquish friendship, and neither time nor distance ever weakened the affections he so discriminatingly gave. And now, as on all his other visits to Oxford, there were memories of himself when young and in love:

I pass the shop where Esther, a slim girl,
Chose herself roses for a ball.

Our own encounter lasted longer than the phrase he gives it—"the foregone conclusion of a business lunch." At the table in the Randolph he talked, the business concluded and in part foregone, of Mariette his first wife, the slim girl who chose roses, roses all the way. It had been with her mother that he was first infatuated, sitting at her feet in a house that recalled Troy and Byzantium and Istanbul, Athens and Chios and Crete, all the Aegeans from Homer to Seferis. Then one night Mariette had descended the stairs dressed for a ball.

Her mother did not relish the transfer. I could see why it had been so. I had met her myself, twenty years older but in old age still formidable, not a queen who would have yielded conquest lightly. By then her will to dominate had become a will to use, for her husband's sake, she the guardian priestess of his time and learning.

Talking of them, we walked along St Giles and he pointed out the house where that stair still turned, though the vision had fled. No *figlia chi piange* but a girl who had left him and for whom he had wept. It was the first time he had spoken to me of the self he had been, the self that he still most truly and deeply was. For no man was more tenacious of his past. I felt for the first time that we were friends, and that it would remain so.

Afterwards, I wondered to Bertie about this change. It was because you got drunk together, he said, that day of the lunch in London. Louis never trusts anyone until they have been drunk with him. After that, if he still likes them, he doesn't change. In friendship he is like a virgin, recalcitrant. Friendship means so much to him that at first he kicks against the pricks.

OTHER THINGS were changing. Bertie and Marianne Gilliam were to marry, and we all met in the White Room in London to celebrate, and dined afterwards in the Café Royal. Not long afterwards Dylan Thomas died. No one grieved more than Louis and there is no more splendid memorial to Dylan than the laughing, buoyant poet forever resurgent in *Autumn Sequel:*

. . . young and gay,
A bulbous Taliessin, a spruce and small
Bow-tied Silenus roistering his way
Through lands of fruit and fable, well aware
That even Dionysus has his day.

And it is true that Louis was a great cherisher of friendships, polishing them and fingering them in his memory like beads, intoning their names in *Autumn Sequel* like a litany.

Nowadays whenever he was in Oxford he included us in his round of pieties and usually stayed the night. He and I had both read Greats, and with me he could speak in the shorthand of classical allusion. For the man who has read Latin and Greek in our time is like the bearer of a secret prohibited knowledge. He must reveal it, as the Irish in the days of the Penal Laws spoke Irish, only among those who also know it. Otherwise, his allusions will not be understood, or will be thought an insolent affectation. We do not live in the time of the Guardians, not yet, but Plato is now, nonetheless, a treasonous clerk.

Similarly, he got on well with my wife, partly because her memory was so well stocked with poetry. Once she reminded him of the lines in *Autumn Sequel*—"Save me, Lamb and Flag, Pray for me, Eagle and Child"—and congratulated him on the chiasmus of the Christian and imperial symbols. "Chiasmus?" he said. "I hadn't noticed it. I was thinking only of the two pubs

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on the opposite sides of St Giles, and how often I had fled to them."

My wife's circadian rhythms matched better in those days with late hours than mine and occasionally he would turn up at short warning and they would sit up long into the night talking. I remember one night when I had already gone to bed, after vainly expecting him until the local pub closed. Shortly afterwards, bringing his hostess for dinner as evidence that he had been unavoidably but justifiably delayed, he arrived. I got up again and we drank a choice of gin or tea. We talked about Malcolm Brinnin's book on Dylan, and laughed at the review of it that Dylan might be writing somewhere with brimstone on asbestos. Then my wife persuaded Louis to read a poem of his own, something he did rarely, at least with us. It was "April Fool", which he had lately finished, this being May.

Here come I, old April Fool,
Between the hoar frost and the fall.
Fool me drunk and fool me dry,
Spring comes back, and back come I.

He was in his fiftieth year then, and the hoar frost was in his hair, and on his mind the rime. He was conscious of that paradox of time that overtakes us, the ageing house, and our recalcitrance that we, the tenants, are still the same old identities, some of them at least still young. And the following September on his birthday, in the ML Club—where, as Ian Rodger said, it is always afternoon—he pointed to the grey hairs, a few of them, in his temple, and gave me his wry smile. I remembered the smile later, reading "It came to me on the Nile my passport lied, Calling me dark who am grey."

Death was no less busy than usual in those years, and we were all by now of an age to be reminded constantly that we were vulnerable; that, though everyone does not live, everybody dies. In 1958 Joyce Cary died, and my wife was much preoccupied with arranging his papers and preparing the final version of his posthumous novel. Once she took Louis to the empty house where the dead man's presence seemed still a living thing. While she worked among the papers Louis fingered the rhyming dictionary that Joyce had put together when he was writing his poems. Louis kept it in his hands, long and marvelling, a man himself obsessed with rhyme, and the ways it opened to one's undiscovered meanings, the discipline and rules it imposed on their expression, as the walls of a squash court impose a certain pattern of behaviour on the ball and players.

Time, too, brought the penalties of a certain fame, more grotesque in our day. For oblivion is no longer permitted, now that literature has become an academic subject, to do its dung-beetle task. Writers have become the honey-cows of academic ants and are milked sedulously of manuscript. Foul papers are the unskimmed milk and it is the first draft rather than the last which qualifies for the museum's immortality. Almost any scrap of paper is oil to Texas, something to be shuffled off to Buffalo.

For Louis there was something sinister about libraries and museums: however the scholar in him might value them, in his poetry they tend to symbolise *nature morte*, life dead and so susceptible of control, the immortal shrivelled to the immortelle. He went in dread of their touts and scavengers, at that time plentiful in the literary bars and clubs. Once he surprised an ardent middleman groping in his office wastepaper basket. And in the ML Club when he wanted to read the draft of a new poem he would draw us aside first into a safe corner. "That man" was over there. Yet one must concede that he himself, in hard times, had had transactions with "that man." This fact was now a factor in his dislike.

ONE POEM TO BE JEALOUSLY concealed was the long-promised prologue to "The Character of Ireland." He had travelled a great deal in the years since the war—in Greece, India, Africa and South Africa ("What must it be like in a country governed by mad babies?", he said of the latter), in the United States and the Far East. Though his feeling for Ireland was as intense as ever, the poem divulged an impatience with the provincialism of the Irish quarrel:

To the tourist
This land may seem a dreamland, an escape,
But to her sons and even more her daughters
A dream from which they yearn to wake; the liner
Outhoots the owls of the past. The saffron kilt
May vie with the Orange sash but the black
and white
Of the press of the rest of the world scales down
their feuds
To storms in a teacup. What is the Border
Compared with the mushroom fears of the dizzy
globe
In which no borders hold?

Nevertheless, he resumes:

We who were born in this land of words and water
Know that to judge a love by the facts alone—
And even should the affair be ended—means
To say it never happened. Which is false.
What happened must persist.

And so, he seems to say, the poetry and life of Ireland still flow on beneath the quotidian and provincial prose, even when we forget or are too exasperated to see them:

So the eye
Can miss the current in a stream, the ear
Ignore even a waterfall, the mind,
Intent on solid fact, forget that water,
Which early thinkers thought the source of all things.
Remains the symbol of our life; yet never,
No more than peat can turn again to forest,

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No more than the die, once cast, can change its spots,
No more than a child can disavow its birthplace,
No more than one's first love can be forgotten,
If pressed, could we deny this water flows.

His own stream was passing now through steeper banks. His marriage had come under a late and breaking strain. He seemed deeply depressed in himself. He would throw it off when he came down to stay in Oxford. His visit for the 1961 election to the Chair of Poetry gave him rich amusement, even if his relish was somewhat sardonic and he interpreted such remarks as "the corpses are nominating the killer" as being deeper than the donnish witticisms they were meant to be. Another time he was preparing a programme on Oxford stone and we took him to visit quarries in the Cotswolds, and one could see his mind playing with the various uses of the stone, his imagination not very far from the mortality that flaking stuff so often covered, the holes it left behind and the holes it stopped, thoughts of permanence and passage.

One could see him in these years trying to come to terms with the Laocoön of middle age, wrestling in unspoken desperateness with something he knew could not be cured but seemed reluctant to endure. In the Irish way, and in the way of gregarious writers everywhere, he had always made much use of alcohol and pubs, was at home in them sometimes it seemed more than he was at home. He had never sought an exclusively literary company. For him, a "maker" could as well be a man of action as a man of letters. He liked men who played games well, men who worked provided that they did work, men who made things with their hands—he once told my wife that if he had a second life to live he would have liked to make things in a medium other than words, to carve in wood perhaps or in stone. He liked men of strength and courage, hard men.

BUT OFTEN IN THESE later years the hard men were the hard drinkers. He seemed to need the company of men who could keep it up all night, and not for just one night. I remember a chance meeting with him one morning in the York Minster before it became too genteel to serve pints. Of the two men with him, one was barely awake and the other could scarcely overcome an aphasia. Louis' own voice was reduced to a raucous croak, his eyelids were canopies, and the set of his mouth was diagonal. I gathered they had not been in bed for two nights running. Louis indeed made me think of a sleep-walking pedestrian who has wakened in the middle of a zebra crossing and sees that there is no further side. He seemed to be on the run from himself, from some kind of despair.

The Dove's is now the raven's day
And there is interest yet to pay,
And in these branches, gibbet-bare,
Is that a noose that dangles there?

Those lines from *Visitations* were written a few years before this time but the mood they suggest seemed now to have become almost dominant. He may have been at some crisis of his creative powers, the springs blocked, the images within fixed in some intolerable pattern. If so, he was using alcohol to jolt the frozen kaleidoscope, was kicking against his life as one kicks an obdurate machine. Or he may have hoped that by resuming some earlier pattern of wildness he could recapture the youth and excitement, the escape, that a prolonged pub-crawl can sometimes manage when one is in one's twenties but which eludes one later, when it has a sinister resemblance to self-destruction and the magic mist which sheltered the epic hero becomes merely a cloud of voluntary unknowing, a shroud to the consciousness.

HE CAME OUT OF THIS in a year or so, in a way that we did not expect, through a new and sudden love affair. Such things have the advantage that they confer afresh from outside an endorsement of a man's failing regard for himself. In the lyrical release, the re-opening of emotion and wonder, his own lyrical gift was freed again. The siege of the dark tower was lifted. It must have been about this time that he began to write the poems of his last book, *The Burning Perch*. Though he seemed serene in the few years that followed, and claimed to be happy, there is a grimness under the surface. A second spring must always be less innocent than the first, because it remembers the winters that lie between, and the last winter to follow. "They were introduced in a grave glade," runs the first line of one poem; and it ends with the line, "They were introduced in a green grave."

There seemed to be gaiety and life dancing over that green glade, however, and towards the end of 1963 I made yet another effort to bring our book to the printer's bed. On 29 August I came to the George in search of Louis, at the end of a day in London. He had been ill, people said, and hadn't been round lately. Someone reported that his sister had gone to see him in Tring where he was living, had found him up and about but obviously ill, and had taken him to St. Leonard's Hospital. He had been doing a programme near Porlock about potholing, and his conscientious craftsmanship—or perhaps an Orpheus-like preoccupation with the underground and the abodes of Dis which recurs from time to time in his life and in his verse—made him feel he had to go underground

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himself. He had caught a chill, neglected it, and there was talk of pneumonia.

I DECIDED TO STAY the night in London and try to see him next morning. I had always thought of him physically as an iron man; and the idea of his being ill struck me as wrong, out of place, menacing. With another friend, Martha McCulloch, I went to see him next day. He was very ill, very cold, his face the colour of an Irish winter sea and sky. I did not like to worry him about our book but told him, to please him, that my colleagues wanted to reprint his early study of Yeats. His smile glimmered, but only to please me. He was himself beyond pleasure. I dropped the idea of asking him to write a new preface. For this was not the face of a man who would breathe much longer, and I felt in my bones that he would not live to write again.

He asked for a novel of Iris Murdoch's when we offered to get him anything he wanted. Not to tire him, we came away. We looked at each other outside, each hoping not to find in the other's eyes the confirmation of what each thought. "Poor Louis is for the high jump, I'm afraid," I said, falling back on the phrase we had used in the war when death had more often to be mocked. She nodded, unable to speak.

I had to go back to Oxford, after the foregone conclusion of another business lunch. On the way to Paddington I remembered all those times at the George, the efforts to break away from the excitement of friends, and Louis, the centre of a little world of poets, a world that would die with him, and then the anxious pursuit of taxis, and the nearly missed trains, with the laughter and the stories still echoing in one's mind. In the train, this last time, I kept seeing that mortal face, the sentry in the dark tower confronting now his final enemy. I had left London for Oxford so often, leaving life behind me. One life now would never follow.

Louis' sister Elizabeth and his second Mary stayed with him day and night from then on at the hospital. Early on the Wednesday morning Elizabeth telephoned Martha McCulloch to bring a transistor radio. Louis wanted music. She brought one to the hospital in the late morning. But the string quartet that had been all tuned up in the back of his mind when he wrote of the meeting in the grave glade had now found somewhere to go. The strings, true or false, would no longer vibrate in that memory. He had returned to his own full past, that past which like all our pasts had seemed never so full that it could not take another draught of time and living and love. More power, power to the Makers. Of whom, he made as well as any.

International Commentary

The International & the Planetary

By Zbigniew Brzezinski

LET ME BEGIN with a disagreeable prediction. As the older generation fades, and the younger ripens, we will increasingly look back on the Cold War as a period marked by relative calm, by a measure of stability, and by a great deal of clarity. I speak of the Cold War in these terms not because of any attachment to the spirit or the issues of the Cold War, but because the Cold War had a certain intellectual form which, I submit, our present age and the years ahead of us will more and more lack. It will, therefore, stand in contrast to the confused, turbulent, perplexing state of global affairs that is presently in the making.

The cause of all this is that Western foreign affairs, not unlike our domestic affairs, are

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leaving an era which over time we have come to understand, and are entering a new era for which we still lack conceptual tools of analysis. I made a stab at this problem in an article for ENCOUNTER and in a book published a year or so ago,[1] but I addressed myself in it primarily to the political-social implications of the transition from one historical era to another. Now I would like to look, first, at the implications of that transition for international affairs; secondly, try to evaluate how that transition affects the perceptions of the older and the younger generation, and how the transition affects the richer and poorer nations; thirdly, to examine the interactions and to draw from the foregoing some general policy conclusions.

"International affairs" as we have come to know them began, I suppose, with the industrial age, and three inventions were critical in the transformation of relationships into a new pattern. The first was the compass, which made possible long-distance navigation, and with it the rise of imperialism and colonialism. Secondly, gunpowder, which required over time the maintenance of a politically organised apparatus of warfare (*i.e.* a professional army) and then, with the growing complexity of weaponry, an industrial infrastructure to sustain it, thereby reinforcing organisational imperatives of the modern state machinery. Thirdly, printing, which revolutionised the civic relationship between the ruled and the rulers. Printing made possible political proselytisation; this, in turn, made for greater mass consciousness, which required novel principles of political mobilisation. Hence the age of Nationalism: the first period in human history of mass political action on the basis of mass commitment.

There are the equivalents of these three factors in the post-industrial technetronic age. First of all, the computers, which make possible the conquest of space on a scale unimaginable just a few decades ago, not to speak of their implications for internal social, economic as well as political behaviour. Secondly, nuclear power, which has revolutionised the nature of warfare and which has qualitatively transformed the relationship between policy and power. And thirdly, electronic communications, which make possible for the first time the spatial intermeshing of humanity on a global scale. Cumulatively, the introduction of these inventions has transformed international affairs in several very significant ways.

1. They make for a condition of what I should like to call high peace/low war. War is now a luxury which only the poor and the weak can afford. In the past the rich nations fought with all the resources at their command, on the basis of sustained national effort, and the richer, industrialised nations, as they engaged in warfare, increasingly absorbed other nations in their conflicts. Today the relationship of conflict to power and wealth is reversed. The rich avoid reliance on a direct force; but force is often the sole resource that the poorer nations possess. It is a fact that since World War II most wars and the vast majority of casualties involved conflicts between poorer and weaker nations. The rich no longer fight directly; at best, they fight by proxy. They no longer engage in head-on, central, war-like confrontations. This is largely because of the introduction of nuclear weapons, which inhibit the use of "all available power" as a matter of policy.

At the same time, formal distinctions between war and peace are now confused and blurred. War used to be officially declared—a custom that has been almost forgotten. Today nations maintain diplomatic relationships and simultaneously engage in acts of war against each other. Indeed, today war looks like peace and peace very often appears like war. This is surely a very basic change in international politics.

2. The introduction of these new inventions makes for a condition that could be referred to as simultaneous congestion and differentiation. Communications clearly bring us together, but science and technology differentiate men and societies. Marco Polo would be *en route* for months from Europe to Asia and he would travel through societies essentially similar in their social and political arrangements, even though differentiated by culture, language, and religion. Today a man can visit the moon, while other men still live on this earth in conditions not unlike those of the Middle Ages. In effect, in the past, space consumed time; now, time compresses space.

This is a radical alteration in the nature of global human inter-relationships. It prompts both psychic propinquity and widening material disparity. It breeds enormous tension and hostility. Moreover, mankind today is more differentiated than at any other point in history. In the past, to be sure, we have had agrarian societies at different levels of development, and industrial societies emerged in the course of the last hundred years. But today we have—in unprecedented co-existence—agrarian societies of a primitive type, of relatively advanced types, agrarian-industrial societies, industrial-agrarian societies, industrial societies, mature industrial societies and increasingly "post-industrial" societies. All this makes for psychic relationships and philosophical differences much more complex than at any

[1] "America in the Technetronic Age", ENCOUNTER January 1968; *Between Two Ages* (Viking, 1970).

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point in human history. We are somehow "closer" and yet we are much more differentiated.

3. There is in the less developed nations a novel condition—overt despair. This feeling is one of increasingly active frustration, rather than of passive resignation which was typical of the agrarian age and even of much of the industrial age. We thus have a situation which is fundamentally different from the conditions of 19th-century Europe when Europe was beginning to industrialise.

THERE ARE A NUMBER of fundamental differences between processes of modernisation today and when the West (*i.e.* Europe and America) experienced industrialisation and modernisation. The first involves a different relationship between population and economic growth. In the 19th century economic growth in the industrialising countries was equal to (or somewhat more rapid than) population growth. Today population growth is more rapid than economic growth, on a ratio of two-to-one and in some places even three-to-one. This creates obvious demographic pressures of the sort which the world in its earlier period of change—which was much more compartmentalised—has not previously experienced.

Furthermore, there is now a different relationship between unemployment and social stability. As the West industrialised and industry expanded, we absorbed into this society added increments of labour through the process of immigration. Europe, as it industrialised, absorbed into the urban centres the needed labour; but the needless labour, or the economically underemployed labour, remained in the countryside, part of the traditional fabric of religious and social institutions. Today we have a massive influx of people into the urban centres of the world, the urban slums of the world, and with it prospects of massive unemployment. It is estimated that in about fifteen years from now about 20% of the labour-capable males in the less developed nations are going to be unemployed. If all the Five-Year Plans of the less developed nations in Asia are met, the number of jobs will grow by 140 million. The number of employable males during the same period will have grown by 270 million. The prospect of massive global unemployment is a reality and it creates an entirely different attitude towards social and political institutions, given the less traditional and much more uprooted context in which it operates.

Nor is this all. There is also a different relationship between subjective and objective change. In the 19th century, objective change was more rapid than subjective change. That is to say, the rates of coal extraction, of steel production, of urban growth, of living space and of social welfare available to individuals, expanded more rapidly than changes in political consciousness, to the extent that these can be measured by the growth of literacy. Today subjective change expands infinitely faster than objective change. The real revolution today is in access to schools, to universities, to radios, to newspapers, and increasingly to television. This produces an entirely new subjective relationship to one's environment. Indeed, the mass production of pseudo-educated college graduates in the less developed nations (although not only there) is producing instability of the sort which in 1970 erupted in Ceylon (it was largely a college-based revolution). Taken together, this makes for conditions of great frustration, of enormous social tension. Frantz Fanon is thus much more relevant to the Third World today than Karl Marx.

AS A RESULT, it is increasingly difficult to subsume revolutionary developments in the Third World within the organisational framework of one ideology, something which some people still expected in the early phases of the industrial revolution, when Marxism universalised the Western experience and made it appear to be globally applicable. Today, the much more likely pattern of behaviour in the Third World is going to involve a series of frustrated outbreaks, in the context of intense but rapidly changing radical beliefs.

Finally, a special role is being played by cultural crises in the advanced countries. The essential nature of the crisis can perhaps be best described by quoting from the words not of a social scientist but of a novelist. As Herman Hesse wrote in *Steppenwolf:*

> Human life is reduced to real suffering, to hell, only when two ages, two cultures and religions overlap. There are times when a whole generation is caught in this way between two ages, two modes of life, with the consequence that it loses all power to understand itself and has no standard, no security, no simple acquiesence.

It was from this passage that I borrowed the title of my book, and it seems to me to capture most perceptively the basic dilemma of the advanced societies.

CONTRARY TO HISTORIC EXPECTATIONS, wealth is producing not social stability nor an affluent conformity but, increasingly, a collapse of established sociological values in confusion and uncertainty. It has also bred a further danger: a new social situation has developed

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in which significant portions of the younger generation—naturally much more perplexed by this new reality because they are much more exposed to it—have adopted a posture of growing escapism rather than involvement. Given the nature of the age, that withdrawal tends to proclaim itself as idealistic; thus there is a great deal of talk today about idealism among the younger generation. But I think it is a fair observation to say that a great deal of this self-proclaimed idealism is, in fact, a form of hedonism and narcissism. I say this more in a spirit of analysis than of criticism, for in an age of perplexity and novelty, in an age which lacks intellectual moorings, it is easier to find fulfilment in the self, though prevailing moral standards still dictate the necessity of high-minded rhetoric. Accordingly, I find the real danger to young people today to be not one of over-engagement but of under-engagement, that is to say, their sporadic civic commitment is constantly limited by the difficulties marked by a great hedonistic and narcissist personality. The older generation, at the same time, devoted to only partially relevant truths, increasingly adopts a defensive posture of protecting vested traditional interests rather than of translating their commitment to the future into significant and morally desirable actions of their own.

This problem is most acute in American society but I think that Western Europe as well as Japan are also beginning to experience it, and I suspect that this dilemma is boiling beneath the surface of the communist systems. There, unlike in our own system, change is covert and gradual; it involves gestation and then erupts violently, whereas in our society we have a tradition of unstable stability, or of protracted and overt turbulence, which provides some safety-valves even though it makes, occasionally, for some very painful confrontations.

THESE FOUR CHANGES taken together involve, in my view, a very novel fusion of domestic and international processes. If I were to search for an analogy which explains best to me (writing as I am in Manhattan) what the world is about today, I would say that the world is New York City and New York City is the world; that is to say, a community of extremely ill-defined jurisdictions, of overlapping sovereignties, a curious mixture of violence and order, of change and retrogression, of a precarious coexistence which is close physically, remote culturally, and socially divided between affluence and poverty. This is what the world is becoming, and this is why international politics is ceasing to be what it has been and is becoming a *single, protracted, global political process* in which there is fusion between the domestic and the international, in which one can no longer sharply demarcate domestic politics from international politics. All of this makes for enormous difficulty in interpretation, in the definition of priorities and, thus, for the development of sustained policies.

This conceptual problem is further complicated by differentiated generational experiences. In a way the older generation enjoys the corrupting luxury of apparent clarity; the younger, the enervating stimulus of overwhelming perplexity. All of this is made more difficult by the limitations on the human capacity for incisive conceptualisation.[2]

As a broad generalisation in this connection, let me suggest that the older generation, as it looks at the world, tends to emphasise international problems. The questions of power, if you will, the goal of stability or the more morally desirable goal of peace, are the central organising points of reference for a great deal of the information which the older generation processes about the state of the world. The younger generation, as I see it in my encounters with younger persons on several continents, focuses more on planetary concerns. It therefore stresses the more generalised question of human survival, and hence its goal is that of development or of social well-being.

Let me suggest further that both are partially right but, because of the nature of the transition from traditional international politics to a new global political process in which we find ourselves, it is very difficult to develop plans or ideas or a *Weltanschauung* which would give both generations a shared standard and a common sense of direction. Moreover, the tense dialectical conflict between the two perspectives makes it even more difficult to construct a viable synthesis.

The problems of power are, of course, still with us and in some respects they are acquiring new and very important dimensions. Certainly the continuing American-Soviet rivalry is not a mere matter of the historic personalities of V. I. Lenin or John Foster Dulles; it is also a matter

[2] Recent scientific studies estimate that about 80% of the information which an individual processes is from vision. Analysis of the physiological operation of human vision has given us some estimates of the percentage of "inputs" that the human mind can actually process. It is roughly one bit of information (bit in the computer sense) for every 10^8 of the information received; roughly, of 100 million bits only one can be processed. This means enormous selectivity in what we actually "internalise" and "structure" in an intellectually significant way. Obviously, in this context, cultural-experiential reinforcement is of enormous importance in the subconscious, and there is only rarely deliberate and conscious organisation and conceptualisation of the information that we actually receive and then process.

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of de Tocqueville, by which I mean the pages in his classic work on Russo-American rivalry, century-old political realities. Two enormous continental powers with different historical traditions and different value systems—relations between them are bound to be complex, and human nature being what it is and organisational compulsions being what they are, the co-existence is bound to be competitive. This competition is becoming more rather than less complicated. One new factor in it, which we have not yet grasped intellectually, is the question of "parity" in the American-Soviet relationship. What does it mean for our relationships when a crisis develops? Is it possible to bargain effectively and steadily in such a confrontation? They have never dealt with each other before in the setting of parity. All crises until now have operated in a setting of asymmetry of power. We have no guiding lessons, no diplomatic-military experience which can be deemed relevant, and the problem could become acute. One need only look at the India-Pakistan War, or at the continuing Middle East explosiveness, to realise the immediacy of this problem.

Secondly, there are novel imperial dilemmas facing the last two major imperial powers in the world. One concerns the United States and its relationships with Latin America. As Yankee preeminence fades, can the U.S.A. strike a new balance, a new relationship of stability with the southern hemisphere? On the Soviet side, an even younger and in some respects perhaps more vigorous imperial system clearly is not at all acquiescing to the dismantling of its vast imperial assets. What the Soviet Union has been doing in Eastern Europe since 1968 clearly involves the shoring up of its several imperial relationships. There are also grounds for anxiety about the future position of Yugoslavia, given its internal divisions and the likelihood of a major political crisis after the death of Tito.

Thirdly, we confront novel diplomatic and power complexities stemming from a new triangular configuration in the world. This is the Washington-Peking-Moscow relationship, which has now dramatically surfaced with urgency and importance. There is also the Washington-Moscow-European relationship, which involves such issues as the *Ostpolitik* and the European Security Conference, as well as the mutual balanced force reduction proposals. There is the Washington-Tokyo-European triangle, particularly in the economic and financial field. There is the Washington-Peking-Tokyo triangle in Asia. All of these demand a degree of diplomatic effort which taxes the ability of individual decision-makers and which imposes unprecedented strains on existing policy-making machinery.

There is, beyond that, the reality of autonomous conflicts, and these are not necessarily the products of the past-1945 epoch. The Middle Eastern conflict has a vitality of its own; the India-Pakistan conflict is far from resolved; Viet Nam is both an extension of the Cold War and a problem in its own right, namely a national civil war. All of these involve burdensome questions of power.

LASTLY, IN THIS QUICK overview of international political realities, we now witness the appearance on the scene of new power aspirants. As American primacy begins to recede and the United States reappraises, agonisingly or not, its relationships with the world, new powers are stepping forth as would-be dominant regional powers. If I can put it this way, the retirement of the global policeman precipitates a competition for local police jobs. This rush to regional "law and order" itself breeds tensions and political problems. Brazil clearly aspires to become the dominant southern hemispheric power, and I rather suspect that within the next five years anti-Brazilianism may become as strong a motivating political force on the Latin American continent as today anti-Yankeeism is. Iran is beginning to play a dominant role in the Persian Gulf, and this is producing conflicts with Iraq and, by proxy, with the Soviet Union. India clearly sees itself now as the dominant power in the southern Asian continent and perhaps as a major Asian power, challenging even China. In the Far East there is uncertainty concerning the future of those classical Asian giants, Japan and China. All of this, creating tensions, conflicts, and power dilemmas, interacts with the new realities that obsess the younger generation and which have, as I have suggested, a planetary dimension.

HOW DEEP AND LASTING is the clash between the two perspectives? The younger generation seems to be more concerned with the ecological problem, and this clearly does have a global dimension. Because of it, there is now a widespread anxiety about the development, indeed even the moral justification, of science and technology. For the more advanced countries, increasingly oriented toward science-intensive industries, this is causing particularly acute dilemmas.

There is also a nutritional concern. This is not only a matter of survival but also of general poverty, of social injustice, of population growth. The fact is that, in spite of all of the development in agricultural capabilities, the per capita food consumption in the less developed nations today is no better than it was before World War II.

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What has improved are the means of distribution and the system of production in some of the most demographically dense areas, but the per capita results have not improved, and the "nutritional problem" therefore remains a very basic issue.

The question raised by the younger generation is whether the world can long endure such large pockets of backwardness. Can New York endure with an impoverished ghetto? And if "the world is New York", can the world endure with global ghettos? Can we compartmentalise suffering? That, too, is a political problem ultimately, as well as a moral one. It is unlikely that politics and the economics of human suffering can safely be compartmentalised, and the divisive issue of social justice—heretofore primarily a domestic one—is thus becoming a central one in the global political process.

Finally, many in the younger generation are saying that if the 19th century was the century of the quest for personal liberty (and I think it was, starting with the American and the French revolutions and then through the "Spring of Nations" of 1848), then the 20th century in its latter decades is becoming the epoch of the quest for equality. Here the problem is: how do we define "equality"? How do we provide for a "true equality" on the racial front, on the generational front between young and old, on the social front between white- and blue-collar workers, and on the sexual front between men and women? Can it ever be resolved? Can equality even be statistically defined? Let us only say that it involves complex moral issues, and that also, it involves political issues, for the conspicuous absence of equality has become today as much of an explosive issue as the absence of liberty was in the 19th century.

I WOULD SUBMIT THAT the interaction between these concerns of the young and old, both of them involving a real and yet a partial insight into our current condition, is a conflicting one. In a way, we are confronted here with a set of dialectical contradictions between old international concerns and new planetary aspirations, and each, though real, makes the resolution of the other more difficult. Political rivalry doubtless conflicts with the quest for the improvement of the human condition and with the struggle for human survival. The violence and slaughter on the Pakistan and Indian fronts are the most recent examples of this contradiction. But the solution to the problems posed by political rivalry is not to pretend that the exercise of power in world affairs is misguided, and that the search for a balance of power (with all the accompanying costs) is somehow immoral. We cannot ignore power and those who do are, it seems to me, engaging essentially in escapism.

Nationalism keeps alive old conflicts, and who can doubt it? But nationalism is also a source of cohesion, and we do know of the danger that the absence of deep beliefs and growing scepticism may paralyse meaningful action. It is difficult in a sceptical age to be truly and enduringly idealistic. Surely, an active idealism can be sustained only if it is wedded to something more than momentary passions and enthusiasms. Accordingly, idealism today is increasingly characterised by a sporadic quality and lacks the seriousness of a long-term commitment.

Can it be seriously contended that the development of science and technology is not imperative for effective solutions to our world-wide dilemmas? Yet there is no doubt that science and technology differentiate mankind both quantitatively and qualitatively. Still, without reliance on the developing ingenuity of our scientists and technologists there simply is no solution to most, if not all, of the planetary issues with which the younger generation is particularly concerned.

Similarly, I think it is quite undeniable that economic growth is clearly necessary to deal with problems of material inequality and social injustice. Yet we are also faced with the prospect of inadequate natural resources and the ecological costs of higher production. This will have a particularly important effect on those nations which have been heretofore accustomed to operate from a basis of resource bounty. This has particularly grave implications for the United States which, in the course of the next twenty years, is likely to shift from a resource-plentiful nation to a resource-importing nation. This change will further complicate our own internal development as well as our capacity to operate effectively on the international scene. All of these dilemmas pose the danger that the older generation, by focusing primarily on the traditional international problems, may inadvertently keep alive old hostilities; and yet the young, because the very scale of their concerns escapes intellectual clarity, may turn their backs on formidable issues which confront the world today. The cumulative effect of that, I fear, will not be War or Neo-Imperialism, but increasingly a condition of global anarchy—of a progressive global breakdown. It will be a chaos which will operate across boundaries, and we will not be able to compartmentalise ourselves from it. The real danger for the 1970s and '80s is a world-wide disintegration of social and political order: in brief, a planetary fragmentation of peoples and states.

TO RESPOND TO THIS will not be easy, for to state the problem is easier than to define the remedy. Moreover, inherent in what I am suggesting is

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the proposition that it is impossible at this stage to formulate totally relevant responses. We appear to be at the beginning of an age which we have not yet grasped. We are, in a way, where our ancestors were when, for the first time, man began to leave the agrarian epoch and moved towards the industrial age. This novel complexity confronted Europe with acute times of trouble, and Europeans for a century and more struggled with this new historic dilemma. Finally, through a process of debate and dialogue, of confrontation and confusion, of fear and apprehension, two syntheses emerged which then gave the successive generations a sense of historical direction. These two syntheses were clearly Liberalism and Marxism. Both provided meaningful, historically relevant, and morally imperative guides to conduct. Indeed, when the U.S. still had the luxury of imitating others because it seemed to be "historically behind", the American system was saved by creatively adapting both Marxism and Liberalism to the American context: the Rooseveltian "New Deal."

Today America is the society in the forefront of the thrust into the new age, and this is what makes it extremely difficult for Americans at this stage to develop relevant conceptualisation. The problem is, first of all, a conceptual one: how to integrate this new experience with the old, and then, on that basis, to develop relevant policies. As a very broad suggestion, movement along three lines impresses me as historically pertinent and might help eventually to define a true and practicable approach to the next decade.

The first is perhaps self-evident, but let me state it anyway: the United States as a society has no choice but to remain actively involved in the world. Its continued global involvement in the affairs of other continents doesn't only imply slogans and benign wishes; it means a combination of the American resources of power and reform. But I believe that a move either to pacifism, or to protectionism, or to isolationism would contribute to global anarchy. Accordingly, I favour a deliberate effort to create a community of the developed nations, spanning the Atlantic and the Pacific, and embracing Western Europe and Japan in the first instance and associated states in the second. These are the states which are, more or less, in a similar historical stage of development; and these are the states which confront some of the same dilemmas. The "Atlantic" concept was a relevant idea for the 1950s and '60s, but today we need surely a broader global concept, one on which a new structure of international cooperation can be built. Unless such a community emerges, I do not, for example, see the advanced world undertaking effective aid to the Third World; nor can I see an effective division of labour or an effective specialisation in technological and scientific assistance.

Secondly, although I do not see an effective resolution of the Cold War and, even though conflict—political and ideological—with the communist states is a continuing reality, it behoves us to try to engage the communist countries, when they are ready, in globally cooperative undertakings. This is why we have to persist in what I once called "peaceful engagement with the East",[4] but we should not let ourselves be deluded by the thought that this ought to be the primary axis of world peace. I do not believe that a Congress of Vienna-like structure can be built on the basis of a contrived arrangement with those who still are our adversaries and at the cost of hard-won constructive relationships between America and her allies.

Lastly, the real need for leadership today in the United States is not for "personal leadership." Charismatic appeal, real or manufactured by mass media, is not the historical need at the moment. The need is for conceptual leadership—which can span the real gaps in perception of reality inherent in the present generational and national divisions. The recovery of this kind of conceptual relevance is, therefore, an imperative of our time.

[4] "Peaceful Engagement: A Plan for Europe's Future", ENCOUNTER, April, 1965.

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BOOKS & WRITERS

Making Friends with Darkness

Gurus Galore—By GORONWY REES

"You—you will make no terms with the spirits of fire and earth and air and water. You have made the darkness your enemy. We—we exchange civilities with the world beyond . . ."
W. B. YEATS: *The Celtic Twilight*

YEATS was taunting the Scots because they had "soured the disposition of their ghosts and fairies." Mr James Webb, however, sees in Yeats's words the challenge which all Irrationalists issue to their Rationalist opponents, and uses them as an epilogue to his excellent book, *The Flight from Reason.*[1] Certainly the Irrationalists could not have found a better champion; for Yeats, the greatest poet of the twentieth century, was also one who had devoted his entire life to "exchanging civilities with the world beyond."

For Yeats, even if the greatest, was only one among a host of witnesses who, during the last century and in this, tried to present an alternative to the vision of reality which we are offered by science. It is hardly necessary to say that their witness has, for the contemporary mind, been discredited by the triumphant advance of science, whose material and theoretical achievements have established it as the dominant ideology of our age. Its triumph has been in no way impeded by any opposition offered by its ancient enemy, religion, whose remaining devotees today almost consciously worship at the altars of the dead. By now, the challenge, such as it is, comes from other sources.

Yet, as Mr Webb shows, the nineteenth century, which witnessed the death of God and the triumph of the scientific outlook, also gave birth to an astonishing variety of sects and movements dedicated to the proposition that the only real world is the World Beyond. Their very profusion and eccentricity reveal how far established religion had failed to meet the need which they satisfied. The hungry sheep had not been fed and were forced to find new pastures. They were offered very strange nourishment. Many found it in movements like Theosophy, or Spiritualism, or Christian Science, or Freemasonry, and their followers are still numbered in thousands and hundreds of thousands. Others sought refuge in obscure and esoteric sects, Saint-Simonians, Rosicrucians, Brothers of the Golden Dawn, Cabalists, both Christian and Druidical, Hermetic Scientists, and innumerable others, all in some degree devoted to the pursuit of a Secret Wisdom whose mysteries could not be penetrated except by the adept.

Mr Webb describes the rise and fall of such movements in fascinating detail. Equally fascinating is his account of their prophets, true and false. They included mystics, magicians, poets, political conspirators, charlatans and crooks: and some were all of these at the same time. A writer whose *dramatis personae* includes Madame Blavatsky, Josephin Paladan, Karl Wilhelm Naumdorf, the Abbé Boulan, Eliphas Lévi, Anna Kingsford, McGregor Mathers, Yeats himself, does not lack for human material and Mr Webb does justice to its richness and variety. He is particularly good in tracing the obscure and subterranean spiritual affiliations through which these pilgrims of eternity were bound together. Though the particular systems of magical or mystical belief which they professed might differ superficially, for eclecticism is the golden rule of all modern magical systems, they were treading a single path and their spiritual wanderings took them towards a single goal. Sometimes Mr Webb almost makes us believe that they were only emanations from one vast *Spiritus Mundi* in which all, however eccentrically, lived and moved and had their being.

Behind their varieties of mystical and magical experience there lay an ancient tradition and doctrine whose roots ran as far back as Plotinus, Pythagoras and the Pyramids, as far apart as the Ganges, the Euphrates and the Nile, and which has persisted, evolved and decayed over centuries in response to one of the most powerful of human needs: the need for contact with, and if possible control over, a world that lies beyond the world of the senses. This was the great Secret Tradition, which underlies all modern magical systems, and though those who consciously became its adepts may be few, Mr Webb has no

[1] *The Flight from Reason.* By JAMES WEBB. Macdonald, £3.25.

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difficulty in showing that its influence was pervasive enough to make itself felt in such unlikely places as the Indian National Congress, Polish irredentism, the Fabian Society, and Celtic nationalism, and even more specifically in some of the most important modern literary and artistic movements. When art becomes a surrogate for religion, it becomes itself a form of magic and aspires to the same understanding and control of the World Beyond which magic has always professed to exercise.

Mr Webb's book gains a real distinction from the temper of mind, at once sceptical and sympathetic, in which he approaches this vast amorphous and ambiguous subject, in which what is most ancient and most modern is so inextricably confused. It is not easy to keep one's head in a world in which nothing is what it seems and everything is a symbol for something else, part of a universal system of correspondences which, if properly understood, will give us both knowledge of, and power over, the unknown.

Mr Webb keeps his head admirably. In this he differs from Mr Colin Wilson; whose massive book, *The Occult*,[2] covers much of the same ground as *The Flight from Reason*. Mr Wilson has collected an enormous body of information; he has read widely, he is an admirable expositor of other people's ideas, and he has an infectious intellectual optimism which makes his book refreshing to read. Unfortunately, he is not content with so modest a role, and is himself part guru, part mystic, part magician, with his own revelation, which is that magic and mysticism testify to man's possession of a mysterious Faculty-X and that by conscious and assiduous cultivation of it he can ascend to the next and higher stage of his evolution. For him, magic is not a relic of the past but a portent of the future. It might be nice to think this, but in order to do so one would require something more than Mr Wilson's personal assurances, however often repeated, and the curiously assorted jumble of evidence which he offers in support of them. All this is rather a pity, because under Mr Wilson's self-protective shell of pretentiousness, there is, and always has been, a good writer struggling to get out.

Mr Webb's view is a rather different one. Magical systems are, he thinks, a kind of universal dust-bin for the rejected knowledge of past centuries, and modern magicians rather like the vagrants one sometimes sees picking over a refuse heap in search of some rag or bone with which to eke out a scarecrow living. This is to state the case rather more unsympathetically than Mr Webb, who always remains aware that among

[2] *The Occult*. By COLIN WILSON. Hutchinson, £4.50.

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the vagrants there were, and perhaps still are, men and women of genuine spiritual insight.

IN THE PROCESS OF REJECTION, which filled the dust-bin, there were two stages. In the first place, there was that vast body of pagan beliefs and practices which, in the Western world, were thrust into outer darkness by the triumph of Christianity. Condemned and persecuted, they still lingered on, like the Pagan gods, who, in Heine's story, sought refuge in peasants' huts after being hurled from Olympus. But to these, after the sixteenth century, there was also added that further body of ideas, beliefs, superstitions, traditions which were driven into intellectual limbo by the triumph of rationalism.

> The hitherto relatively coherent body of the Secret Tradition [Mr Webb writes] became confused beyond measure by a mass of accretions for which the Rational Establishment could find no place. At the same time, occultists themselves, whether from increasing dissatisfaction with a progressively materialist establishment, whether from a real loss of understanding of what the traditional position had signified for others in the past, began to multiply marvels. The incorporation of Freemasonry into the tradition is a case in point. To join the underground of non-Christian, non-Rationalist speculation came all the casualties of the advance of science. Theories rejected for political or personal ends, together with many that were completely crazy; sciences which were down at heel, and a few unwanted social projects, all these might find a place in the occult underground. The most obvious of all rejected theories are the pseudo-sciences.

But why should men's minds turn so eagerly to the occult at precisely the time when Rationalism was establishing itself as the only valid means of increasing human knowledge and men's control of their environment? For science worked, and magic did not. Mr Webb's answer is that the age of reason was also the age of revolution, intellectual, political and technological, an age of progressively more rapid change proceeding from causes over which the individual could exercise no kind of control, and reducing the individual himself to a product of blind chance operating through the evolutionary mechanism of natural selection. Such a vision of the world was destructive of all the relationships which men had hitherto believed to obtain between themselves and nature, and with what lay beyond nature. The Age of Reason was the Age of Anxiety, and to relieve his fears the individual,

I, a stranger and afraid
In a world I never made,

sought refuge in beliefs and practices which assured him both of his place in nature and of his communications with a world of which nature herself was only a reflection and a symbol. Averting their eyes from the hostile gaze of science, men made a friend of the comforting darkness; for even Satanism has a human form. Increasingly, they "exchanged civilities with the world beyond."

Mr Webb develops his theme with great persuasiveness and with a wealth of illuminating examples. Indeed, reading his book, one sometimes feels that the very absurdity and extravagance of some of the beliefs he describes are the best possible evidence for the depth and intensity of the need they satisfied and the fear they relieved. *Credo quia impossibile* is as true for magic as it is for religion.

Mr Webb's argument is all the more persuasive because it is as relevant to our own time as it is to the nineteenth century, with which the greater part of his book is concerned. For the Flight from Reason has not ceased. Rather, it has gathered speed and momentum, like some jumbo jet carrying millions of passengers on its climb into the unknown. How many modern gurus we are reminded of when we read the Archduke Johann of Austria's description of Baron Reichenbach's particular brand of spiritualism as "an unsatisfactory revival of Indian metempsychosis theory, Christian morals, the mysticism of the Middle Ages, and Kant's philosophy."

The Flight from Reason is described as the first volume of a larger work entitled *The Age of the Irrational*, and one looks forward eagerly to the publication of its successor.

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The Extremists of Al Alvarez

Suicide, Chaos, Violence—By GEOFFREY GRIGSON

I CANNOT find much in *The Savage God*[1] which makes it worth prolonged consideration. Mr Alvarez states that he has written a "study of suicide." His publishers state that he has tried to discover why people commit suicide. But I detect —and for this I do not require to be much of a Maigret—two authors in the same Alvarez, as here exhibited; and two books. They are not easily separable.

One Alvarez ("who was educated at Oundle School, and Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he obtained a first-class degree in English") has exploratory concerns or prime interests of a literary-sociological kind which centre upon a quartet of contemporary poets and a postulated style he calls Extremism shaped by the internal features of the present casting-mould, the present "situation." His poets, "the four leading English-language exponents of the style," are, as we know perhaps too well, the three Americans Robert Lowell, John Berryman and Sylvia Plath, and Sylvia Plath's husband and relict, Ted Hughes.

The other Alvarez is the bookman, the promoter and journaliser of his interests or concerns; and if a book is to be made—the journalist or journaliser taking over—it is likely that more readers will be attracted by the "situation" than by a close consideration of the favoured poets or their poems; and still more, if the "situation" can be subsumed and proffered in one of its morbidly fascinating elements.

The lead therefore is given to suicide. But conveniently one of the favoured poets can share the lead, since she obligingly wrote about suicide, and even committed it, and since her story has become the object of a cult ("Anything by or about Sylvia Plath goes down well on these heights"—report from Hampstead in *The Bookseller*, 25 December 1971, on "Christmas in the Bookshops"). Mr Alvarez, who has so pushed and so over-valued the poems of Sylvia Plath, can say in his prologue that they are now classics, that he and none other introduced them to a Sunday paper, that he himself knew the poet, in life; and in death, on the kitchen floor—"The builders forced the lock and found Sylvia sprawled in the kitchen. She was still warm"—and in her coffin—"She lay stiffly, a ludicrous ruff at her neck. Only her face showed. It was grey and slightly transparent, like wax." (all of which would have been in the London Sunday paper as well had the poet's husband not protested).

The book, accordingly, begins by mixing sensationalism and concern, which it continues to do in other respects, until the reader requires a separator to divide the two, or to divide Alvarez from Alvarez. He may remember, as he turns the handle, after adjusting the disparate buckets or the bowl and the bucket, that this critic has written of his indifference to the palpability around him; and if he should have looked ahead from the prologue to the epilogue, the reader may also be remembering that Mr Alvarez confesses himself to be "a failed suicide", a fact which gives him a special personal investment, we may suppose, in his notions of external and internal violence, and Extremism.

His notions? When the last fluid ounce has passed through the machine, much of the rather small bowl of resultant cream will be found to be tinned rather than fresh, after all; to be an altered and I would say debased borrowing from Camus on the Absurd and death and suicide, and man in revolt, and creating dangerously.

HERE THEN IS THE SCHEME of the book: in that prologue, Sylvia Plath, who must be shown to have been rather less a pathological suicide than a bold explorer of the purlieus of death into which she was tempted, always in ultimate control, always taking an explorer's risk which at last (in that London house where Yeats had once lived) proved to be too great—Sylvia Plath sensationalised beyond the business either of his readers or Mr Alvarez. Next, filling the greater part of *The Savage God*, a survey of conceptions and misconceptions of suicide and of the ways in which suicide has impressed itself on the thought and feeling and judgment of writers from Dante onwards (these are surveys of an averagely acute but secondary amateurism such as one might find in the lighter pages of *New Society*). Finally, an exposition in more detail of the Extremism of Mr Alvarez, which is the controlled exploration, through art, of "the nihilism and destructiveness of the self", reflecting accurately "the nihilism of

[1] *The Savage God: A Study of Suicide.* By A. ALVAREZ. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £3.25, New York: Random House, $7.95.

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General:

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our own violent societies." The "best modern artists" survive, if they avoid killing themselves, as "suicides of the imagination: they are scapegoats on our behalf," each "finds himself in testing out his own death and vulnerability"; and the modern art "forces its audience to recognise and accept, in their nerve-ends, not the facts of life but the facts of death and violence; absurd, random, gratuitous, unjustified and inescapably part of the society we have created."

"*Not the facts of life*": Mr Alvarez signs off (though still to come is his little ingratiating epilogue on how he failed to manage his own suicide) by quoting Camus in his remark "There is only one liberty, to come to terms with death. After which, everything is possible." This is neat. It will be remembered, however, that Camus, who rejected suicide (and murder), declared, "But the point is to live", in our situation of the Absurd. Camus didn't stop with the nihilism or with the liberty, he went on to what the liberty makes possible and essential. For example: "Happiness and the absurd are the two sons of the same earth. They are inseparable." Or: "We must simultaneously serve suffering and beauty."

In the heartening light of Camus, of *L'Homme Révolté* and *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, this journalising author of *The Savage God* seems to me to be indulging in the violence and the chaos: he offers a bucket mainly of skim-milk which is black and poisonous—and no wonder with the obscene carrion-Crow of the fancy of Ted Hughes perched on the rim. From the first page the writing accords; it is vulgar and execrable, half assertive, half ingratiating, if fluent.

> We sat out in the big wild garden while little Frieda, now aged two, teetered among the flowers.

The writing proceeds by flaccid cliché, by the language of the blind and deaf who cannot be affected by our surrounding reality; an assortment of "worlds apart", "genius", "sheer ability", "success story", "genuine article", et cetera, which makes one call Camus back once more, asking "If we are not artists in our language first of all, what kind of artists are we?", and which deprives such estimations as it may deliver of authority or plausibility.

In any case I distrust a critic who analyses a *Zeitgeist* more eagerly than he attends to a line or a cadence; whose statements are too often careless (for example, Modigliani did not kill himself, Cowper did not die in an asylum); who is so uninventive that he cannot invent his own titles (the title of this book is purloined from Yeats, the title of the last book by Mr Alvarez was purloined from Marianne Moore, the title of his first book from Coleridge); and who is led by the carrot of his own theory to enthuse over art where art does not noticeably exist.

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In the World, Not of It

On Sufism—By DORIS LESSING

THAT EAST must ever be East and West must be West is not a belief which is subscribed to by Sufis, who claim that Sufism, in its reality, not necessarily under the name, is continuously in operation in every culture. Sometimes invisible, it is at times offered as openly as goods in a supermarket. When this happens, it is expected by them that there will be hostility from those academics who have made orientalism their property, and sometimes from literary or other authoritarian bodies. During well over 1,000 years of connected literary and psychological tradition, embracing Spain, North Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East, they have almost invariably clashed with narrow thinkers. Often the struggle between Sufis and the "establishments" looks unpleasantly like what happened when the Nazis took a stand against something. Some past patterns are unfamiliar to us; others can still be instructive, for in one form or another they repeat themselves.

> Hallaj was dismembered in Baghdad, AD 922, for blasphemy. The evidence against him included the dread indictment that he was the grandson of a Zoroastrian, and that he was "ignorant of the Koran and its ancillary sciences of jurisprudence, traditions, etc. and of poetry and Arabic philology." Searches of the houses of some of his followers showed that they actually possessed books inscribed in gold on Chinese paper. In case you didn't know it, this was taken to suggest that the writings must be heretical, since Manichees used gold ink and Chinese paper. . . .[1]

Suhrawardi was killed in 1191, the charge including "atheism, heresy and believing in ancient philosophers."

Ibn El Arabi of Spain was hauled before an inquisition of scholars in the 12th century, for immodesty in pretending that love-poetry could be spiritual, when it was pornographic.

Sarmad was executed in India in 1563 for exposing his body; he was alleged to be a Jew or of Jewish origin.

Jalaluddin Rumi was accused of publishing trivial folktales in the guise of spiritual writings.

THERE WERE SOMETIMES difficulties in attacking the Sufis, once they had established a name for literature, or could not be shown to be vicious. One such case is the frame-up of Nasimi. Unable to fault Nasimi in argument, certain scholars sent him a pair of shoes as a gift, from another country. Into the sole they had sewn a chapter from the Koran. Then they sent word to the Governor of Aleppo that Nasimi was defiling the Koran. The Governor had his shoe slit open. On the production of the paper Nasimi made no answer to the charge, knowing that he was going to be killed. He was flayed alive, reciting verses.

The charges are always the same. The academic scholars persecute, claim apostasy, ignorance, dubious parentage, desire for power over the people, danger to public order, self-advertisement and the circulation of spurious, superficial or irresponsible literature. But in spite of these accusations, in spite of persecution often followed by judicial murder, the Sufi teachers subsequently became major spiritual authorities to the Islamic world. Most of these Sufis were literary men, and all were marked by their inability to accept the dogmas of their current "establishments." Once safely dead, they could be unofficially canonised; but during their lifetimes many suffered grievously.

But perhaps this treatment was not surprising: people persecute or ignore what they do not understand. And there was something particularly provoking about the Sufis. What, for instance, could a medieval theologian make of a man who called himself a mystic, was interested in man's evolution to a higher level, was associated with scientific work?

It is against this sort of historical background that it can be useful to view Sufi literature, which exists on many levels, from simple entertainment to truths that "lie under the poet's tongue." Codes and the cryptic had their practical, as well as their spiritual, uses.

Oriental studies even today are the Cinderella of the learned world. The reason for this is

[1] E. G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, (1964 edition).

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historical as well as the perennial difficulty that scholars who have cornered a market can refuse, or be unable, to recognise a real Sufi practitioner when one appears; even now our mental sets in the West exclude much factual information about the extent of the influence that Spain, the Arabs, the Moors—Islam—has had on our culture. This influence has been immense, if often not acknowledged at all. It is in this field that we can expect—it is already happening—startling results in academic research. But the block is there, and strong. Professor A. J. Arberry of Cambridge complains in a current book that someone trying to develop in this field "should find himself on the defensive, that he should have to contend with cheap jibes, sometimes with active opposition."[2]

THE CAREER OF IDRIES SHAH, who is the main current exponent of Sufi literature and teaching, has in the past few years shown a resemblance to some of the classical Sufis. The same signs and symptoms of opposition have been seen; but there has also been support, and from the highest levels. Late in 1970, for instance, no sooner had the expected handful of irritated scholars opposed him, than a large body of experts set about writing a *festschrift* (to be published by Cape). They include scholars from the West specialising in orientalism, and also many Orientals, covering between them the whole spectrum of oriental studies in which he works—Islamics, mysticism, Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Sufism, history. They include Arabs and Jews, and academics from both sides of the Iron Curtain, not to mention such people as diplomats, generals, a judge, and a Cabinet Minister who is also a Sufi authority in the Middle East.

The need for this type of active support can be encapsulated in a tale from the Mulla Nasrudin corpus:

> Nasrudin found a falcon sitting on his windowsill. He had never seen a bird of this kind before. "You poor thing," he said, "how were you ever allowed to get into such a state?" He clipped the falcon's talons, cut its beak straight, and trimmed its feathers. "Now you look more like a bird," said Nasrudin.

THERE IS also the problem that we are used to thinking of Eastern philosophies and their representatives through our Indian spectacles. "Gurus" are teachers, are respected by the religious and scholarly establishments, are interviewed plentifully by journalists fascinated by their bizarre and obviously holy practices, are considered the more authentic the more they claim the things of this world are of no account. But Sufism does not resemble in any way what it considers to be a degeneration of a real tradition, and says that you cannot approach Sufism until you are able to think that a person quite ordinary in appearance and in life can experience higher states of mind. Sufism believes itself to be the substance of that current which can develop man to a higher stage in his evolution. It is not contemptuous of the world. "Be in the world, but not of it," is the aim.

But the inability to believe in the combination of the mystic and the practical is not only of our time.

Roger Bacon, the Franciscan monk, lectured at Oxford from Sufi books in the 13th century: it was for his recommendation of Sufi practices that he got into trouble with the religious authorities. Lully of Majorca praised Sufi methodologies, was "a devotee of Arabian mysticism" (Professor E. W. F. Tomlin). Today he finds a place in scientific literature as the inventor of a digital computer. Rumi, poet and mystic, stressed a theory of evolution eight hundred years before Darwin. Shabistari, a 13th-century Persian Sufi, writes of the mystic way while emphasising the unbelievable power which could be released from the atom. El Ghazali wrote of the collective unconscious in relation to medical and psychological techniques. Hujwiri of India, at the time of the Norman Conquest of England, was writing (in a book about Sufi saints) that time and space are identical. Jafar Sadiq and Jabir (Geber), the fathers of Western chemistry, were Sufis. Baba Farid had commercial interests and Rumi had to defend him for it—as probably would have to be done today. For claiming that human enlightenment must be achieved by working with the material world, innumerable Sufis were isolated from potential well-wishers, because of the inculcated thought that they must be superficial if they lived ordinary lives and were concerned with the practical welfare of man. It is to be hoped that this ancient

[2] *Oriental Essays* (1960), p. 256.

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bias will not be strong enough to keep people's minds closed against what Sufism is offering now.

BUT LESS THAN TEN YEARS have achieved a remarkable softening of prejudice. The first of Idries Shah's books, *The Sufis*, which becomes more extraordinary the more it is studied, because of its comprehensiveness, and because of what it is able to state openly about a subject which in its deeper reaches is by definition beyond verbalisation, was accepted for review by the conventional literary establishment for the most part because of pressure from poets and other literary people; it was overlooked by academics in the field. Yet many people, on reading this book which nowhere stated that a "school" was to start, that "The Teaching" was being offered again, applied from all over the world to be students. This is a small example of the multi-sidedness of every Sufi activity and artefact. "We are economical in our functioning," say the Sufis. "If you like, even parsimonious: everything we say, each thing we do, has many different functions and results." A book which will continue as a standard reference book, which will be pasture for academics, is material for esoteric study, but made as dramatic an appearance as a man walking on to stage to blow a trumpet.

THE NEW BOOK, *The Magic Monastery*,[3] continues a theme. People who may ask: "Right then, what *is* Sufism?" will find Sufism's "taste" here. But it is also a textbook for students, if the word textbook is an appropriate word for activity which is not like anything that we have been taught to regard as study.

> Sufism is a study which is not scholastic. Its materials are taken from almost every form of human experience. Its books and pens are in the environment and resemble nothing that the scholastic or the enthusiast even dream about. It is because recitations, effort and books are included in this kind of study, and because Sufi teachers are called "Teacher", that the fact of a specialised communication has become confused with academic or imitative study. There is, therefore, "Sufi study" and "ordinary study" and the two are different. The position is as if "mouse" and "elephant" have both been given the same name. Up to a point (being quadrupeds, being grey, having tails) this inexactitude is of no moment. After that it is necessary to distinguish between the two. This distinguishing takes place in a Sufi Circle.[4]

[3] *The Magic Monastery*. By IDRIES SHAH, Cape, £2.25.
[4] Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi*.

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This book, like some previous ones, consists of pieces of various lengths, each illustrating points, or themes, on various levels. Some are anecdotes, some parables, some are practically informative. But the book differs from its predecessors (except for *Reflections*, Octagon Press) in that Shah includes pieces specially written by himself to complete the book "as a course in non-linear thinking." In previous collections the emphasis has been on tales illustrating the instructional methods employed by sages during the last thousand years, taken from written and oral sources.

The Magic Monastery is particularly and intriguingly informative about methods used by a Teacher in active operation, who cannot always behave according to the conventions of ordinary social usage and politeness: his actions may be sharply at variance with both.

As, for instance, this: a famous 19th-century Sufi Teacher, Jan Fishan Khan, of Afghanistan, heard that a certain scholar was viciously attacking a neighbour. He invited both men to a feast, and, having asked the neighbour to react to nothing that might happen, when the feast was at its height he began to berate him as the scholar had done for iniquities and shortcomings of all sorts. The man kept silent, until the scholar cried, "Please stop. I saw my own behaviour in you, and I cannot bear the sight." Jan Fishan Khan said: "In being here tonight we all took a chance. You that our friend here would not sit patiently but would attack you, I that you might be further inflamed by my vituperation instead of being shamed by it, and he that he might start to believe that I was really against him. Now we have solved the problem. The risk remains that the account of this interchange, passed from mouth to ear by those who do not know what we are doing, will represent our friend as weak, you as easily influenced, and me as easily angered."

Such stuff is designed for—if you like, self-improvement; at least for self-observation. You don't have to be a formal student to make use of it. Nasrudin again: "You have leather? You have thread and nails and dye and tools? Then why don't you make yourself a pair of shoes?"

A difficulty is that some people expect this material to be more sensational than it is; a Sufi would reply that our palates have been blunted; that we do not give gentle impacts a chance to operate; that people can put themselves at a remove from the Sufi operation by calling it "banal."

The necessity for a social or emotional ingredient in a teaching situation is denied by the Sufis, in sharp contradiction of other persuasions, whose advocates invariably, in theory or in reality, strive to include as many subjective and community ingredients as possible in "teaching" contacts. An astonishing parallel to the Sufi insistence on the relatively greater power of subtle communication to affect man, is found in scientific work which shows that all living things, including man, are "incredibly sensitive to waves of extraordinarily weak energy—when more robust influences are excluded".[5]

Finally a piece from *The Magic Monastery* which illustrates the first approach of many people to Sufism:

There is a story about a man who went to a dictionary-compiler and asked him why he was interested in money. The lexicographer was surprised and said: "Wherever did you get that idea?"

"From your own writings," said the visitor.

"But I have only written that one dictionary," said the author.

"I know, and that is the book which I have read," said the other man.

"But the book contains a hundred thousand words! And out of those I don't suppose that more than twenty or thirty are about money."

"What are you talking about all the other words for," said the visitor, "when *I* was asking you about the words for *money?*"

[5] Idries Shah, *The Dermis Probe*. Notes, quoting M. Gauquelin's *The Cosmic Clocks*, which cites recent scientific work.

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Clifford Dyment

A Memoir — By ROBERT GREACEN

AS A SCHOOLBOY in the late 'thirties I remember that, in anthologies of modern poetry, Clifford Dyment used to be one of a trio of the youngest poets included, the others being David Gascoyne and George Barker. I can recall the delight of reading for the first time a poem of Clifford's called "A Switch Cut in April":

This thin elastic stick was plucked
From gradual growing in a hedge,
Where early mist awakened leaf,
And late slow hands with spiral stroke
Smoothed slumber from the weighted day,
Where flowers drooped with colours furled.

In his introduction to Clifford's *Collected Poems*[1] C. Day Lewis has said of the early work:

> It is remarkably composed—in both senses of the word: no screeching emotionalism, no flourish of epithets, none of the showy or desperate expedients we are apt to find in a first book: the poems are "written", with love and a sober respect for words . . . it owes little to the tricks of language or the common preoccupations of the more publicised Thirties poets. Mr Dyment was not in the fashion then, so he has not gone out of fashion since.

Day Lewis also speaks of the "faithfulness" with which Clifford "followed his calling." So far as I could gather from conversation with him over a period of some years Clifford never really wanted to be anything other than a poet—not really seriously, that is; and in view of the early circumstances of his life and the various difficulties he had to contend with until the end—he died on June 5 last year—his achievement as a poet must seem all the more remarkable.

Just over a year before his death I asked Clifford a number of questions about his life and poetry, and made a typescript of the answers. He started off by saying:

> "I am an autobiographical poet because I feel I am only qualified to speak for myself. What I say in my poems is not: 'This is the way it is' but 'This is the way it is *for me*'."

Here, then, are a few biographical facts. Clifford Dyment was born in 1914, in Alfreton, Derbyshire, but spent several happy years in Monmouthshire. By ancestry, if not by birth, he could be called a Welshman—and so he called himself, although he suspected labels of any kind, whether national or other. Then his mother, a war widow, took Clifford and his sister to Loughborough, in Leicestershire, where she had found work. His mother was forced to leave her children for hours every day to their own devices or the indifferent care of strangers. He spent a period with an aunt and uncle who treated him harshly. All this led to a series of illnesses through sheer neglect. Mastoid trouble was incompetently dealt with by a doctor. The effects, physical and mental, were lifelong. He had chronic ear discharge and only partial hearing in one of his ears.

Clifford left Loughborough Grammar School at sixteen—his education there had been paid for out of some fund for the children of men who had died in the First World War—and went to work in a bicycle shop. His broken education meant he had no school certificate, a serious handicap in a period of mass unemployment. He moved from one badly-paid, unskilled job to another, and for a time was on the dole. He was a commercial traveller for a while—a pretty *un*commercial one, I suspect—and assistant in a Montague Burton outfitters. His work experiences gave him a sympathy for the underdog that he never lost, though so far as I know he was never a member of any political party. I should say he was very much a non-joiner. Though a convinced pacifist and one of Dick Sheppard's visitors at Amen Court near St. Paul's Cathedral (where Sheppard was a Canon) he never signed Sheppard's pledge or wore the Peace Pledge Union badge.

WHEN HE WAS TWENTY *The Listener* published one of Clifford's poems and he was launched on a literary career. Janet Adam Smith did much to encourage him and he always felt grateful for her help. She invited him to London to meet his contemporaries such as Gascoyne, Barker and A. S. J. Tessimond. Tessimond became one of Clifford's closest friends. Dylan Thomas also befriended him, and their common Welshness proved a strong bond. This is the way he told me of a significant Dylan Thomas encounter:

> "I actually got my first job in films through him. It was in the early years of the War and I wasn't living in London then but paying periodical visits to try and get a job. I was in an Underground train, on my way back to the Midlands via St. Pancras after one of these unsuccessful interviews when I saw

[1] Clifford Dyment, *Collected Poems* (J. M. Dent, 1970).

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Dylan standing near the doors reading a Penguin called *Queer Street* by Edward Shanks. I got up and said 'hello' and told him gloomily why I was in London and he said immediately: 'I've just been talking to a chap who's looking for a script-writer. Go and tell him I think you're the man he wants.' So I left the train at the next stop and went to see the man he mentioned and got the job."

He repaid Dylan by letting him sleep at his flat when Dylan was too drunk to go home. But on the whole Clifford did not get on well with fellow-poets. They frightened him, especially if they had a Public School and Oxbridge background, and he could not compete with their confident sales-talk. An odd man out among men, he felt an odd poet out among poets.

Clifford's wife—although indeed they were not formally married, as she had never obtained a divorce from her first husband—was the actress Marcella Salzer. Marcella was a refugee from Nazi Germany; half-Jewish, her father had been a notable *"diseur"* in Berlin. Her career as an actress in England started well but in the end fizzled out. Marcella and Clifford seemed to go together somehow—one couldn't have imagined either of them with any other partner, which isn't to say that they hadn't their share of disagreements and quarrels. Marcella's death—also from cancer—two or three years before Clifford's, was a blow from which he never recovered. Added to that, indifferent health, financial anxiety and a feeling that his work was no longer appreciated, made Clifford more solitary than ever. He tended to retreat even from his friends and bury himself in his flat at the top of a house in Harrington Gardens (in the London to which he had come with such high hopes), listening to classical music and reading novels that ranged from Scott and Dickens to Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*. And needless to say, he read and read and read poetry, Yeats in particular.

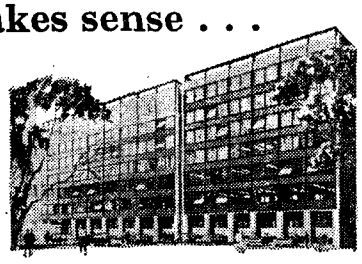
CLIFFORD IS SOMETIMES called a "nature poet." Out of the hundred and fifty pieces in his *Collected Poems* only a dozen or so are about animals, insects and plants. He loathed being encapsulated in a word or two. Yet nature, to which he went for images and symbols, forms a background to his own personal, almost hermetically sealed world. It was through nature that he expressed moral situations. He is a non-denominational religious poet concerned with human destiny, ours and his own. He underlines man's loneliness and doomed striving for perfection. He emphasises the homelessness and rootlessness of modern man. He kept searching for the place he could call home.

Derbyshire born, Monmouth is my home,
Monmouth I call Wales, for the voices there
Speak in the songs of Welshmen, and the names
Used every day there—Llantarnum, Pontypool,
Tyn Barlwyn, Ebbw Vale—
Are letters from Wales wherever I see them in print.
Caerleon, my youthful home, was a green hill,
A Buddha's belly smiling in a flat field,
Its rondure assimilating for a future age
The marvels of Rome—villas, baths, a bracelet;
And the bridge, too, grey over the yellow Usk,
A thick wide river reminding me of Tiber
In later memory, Tiber unseen,
For Caerleon is all romance and Rome to me—
Brachets and palfreys, the tourney, the hart in the woods,
Imperial roads, the caves of Mithra, fortresses,
And the salt of the ships at Newport and Barry.

All these themes are treated with an assured technical skill that employs rhyme and half-rhyme effectively, and makes every word work. In his last years he wrote a number of dream poems that showed a readiness to experiment. A quality that goes far towards making Clifford Dyment so notable among English poets—or Welsh poets—is his integrity, his steadfastness in following the promptings of his own heart.

Apart from his poetry Clifford wrote a fine prose autobiography, *The Railway Game* (1962), that gives an honest account of his childhood.

It makes sense . . .



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His perceptive study of C. Day Lewis in the "Writers and their Work" series was written sincerely and not as a chore. He scripted and occasionally directed short documentary films, especially during the War.

THERE IS A LITERARY curiosity in which Clifford was involved. He wrote a poem called "St. Augustine at 32" and then, later, Victoria Sackville-West published almost exactly the same poem under her own name. This is what Clifford had to say about it:

> "Victoria Sackville-West and I might have drawn from a common unconscious source. The Society for Psychical Research looked into it and newspapers carried the story on their first pages headed 'Piddington Act Among the Poets'—the Piddingtons being famous mind-readers of the time, 1950. However all that may be, the facts, briefly, are these: in 1949 I published 'St. Augustine at 32' in a volume of my poems; also, in 1949, Victoria Sackville-West published the poem, as hers, in *The Poetry Review*. The two poems were almost exactly the same except in title and sex of the subject, mine concerning a monk and hers a nun. As far as I know the episode is unique in literature: there are cases of two authors writing identical lines but not identical complete poems. However, I must add that my 'St. Augustine' had appeared in print twice before 1949—in 1943 and 1944. These complications, and explanatory theories, are discussed by Robin Skelton in his book *The Poetic Pattern* and in a paper by the late Professor Edwin G. Boring in an American book called *Readings for Introductory Psychology*."

The whole business upset Clifford very much and he believed—perhaps wrongly—that he had suffered in reputation as a result. But then he frequently saw any personal embarrassment in a dark light. I could never get him to tell me why he didn't insist on meeting V. Sackville-West and discussing the matter.

Clifford was an odd mixture of diffidence and certainty. His perfectionism limited the quantity of work he got done; and of course it was a handicap in the rat-race of literary journalism into which he made forays from time to time.

His friends will remember Clifford's gentleness, his sympathy for animals and exploited people, his losing of himself in music, his pleasure in shopping cannily and cooking deliciously, his unavailing struggle against the devils of depression, his outbursts of anger against injustice. His best poems and the best passages in his autobiography bear testimony to a life that had much pain and disappointment in it, yet also its moments of joy and fulfillment.

Situating Marx

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Letter from Zagreb

Yugoslavia in Crisis

By Paul Lendvai

One has to have spent long years in the whirlwind of party politics to realise how far men drive each other from their intended courses, and how the world's fate is moved by their efforts, but often in opposite directions from the wishes of those who produced the current, like a kite which flies by the opposing action of the wind and the string. . . .
ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE (*Souvenirs*)

MILLIONS of viewers were glued to their television sets as the prematurely aged man with the rugged face imparted an element of drama to the increasingly boring session:

> We are faced with a Civil War which in fact has already started, if only in mild form. This is a counter-revolution which . . . would have led to genocide. The instigators wanted . . . to provide a pretext for those who wish to offer "help", that is, a brotherly intervention. Had we not restored the unity of our leadership, we would not be sitting in this air-conditioned hall but would have had to fight on the streets.

The speaker was Jakov Blazevic, President of the Croatian Parliament and a spokesman of the veteran hard-liners. The tone if not the content of his improvised lengthy intervention at the December session of the Central Committee of the Croat Communist party recalled the immediate post-war period when Blazevic emerged from obscurity as chief prosecutor at the trial of the controversial Archbishop Stepinac (accused of collaboration with the Fascist Ustasha régime in the puppet "Kingdom of Croatia" set up in 1941 after the Nazi invasion).

Unprecedented scenes which took place in the heart of the Croatian capital the same evening seemed to lend credence to his call to "crush the counter-revolution." Against the background of attractive holiday decorations and a gigantic illuminated Christmas tree, helmeted militia units repeatedly clashed with students. The streets leading to the Republic Square were sealed off by the police to isolate groups of young people roaming the streets. Helicopters hovered over the railway station. The areas in the vicinity of the luxurious new Party building, the near-by student hostels, and the university faculties resembled an armed camp. For four days running, the eruption of the pent-up bitterness of the young called for the special police action.

IT ALL STARTED on Sunday, 12 December, the day when the top political leadership of this second largest constituent republic of Yugoslavia—accused ten days earlier of "rotten liberalism" (*i.e.*, regionalism) by Marshal Tito—was forced to resign. The brief announcement, made at the start of the Central Committee's plenary meeting was the fuse that caused the explosion. Despite a massive turnout of police and army units, the embittered students—twelve leaders had already been arrested on Sunday morning—managed to organise (and not only in Zagreb) sporadic demonstrations in support of "Miko and Savka." Miko Tripalo and Dr Savka Dabcevic-Kucar, both in their mid-40s, were until that fateful Sunday the first genuinely popular Croat leaders since World War II. Their sudden and rather brutal removal inflamed Croat national feelings to a dangerous point.

After several weeks, sheer force restored a semblance of "law and order." At one point over 800 students were kept in custody and summary courts sentenced well over 100 to two-to-three months imprisonment. Shortly thereafter, Dr Vladimir Bakaric, the 60-year-old senior of the Croat party (who, according to his own admission, played a key role in engineering what most Croats call "the coup of the Serbian generals"), smilingly told me in his spacious office: "You see, in one week we have smashed the nationalistic nucleus everywhere. It has been done very easily, perhaps too easily. . . ." With the "action phase" over, the foreign correspondents departed, only to return a month later to the all-Yugoslav party conference in Belgrade. Here they, as indeed the Yugoslav public, were authoritatively told that "the crisis is over", that the "old team" had been backed only by "some individuals", that the bulk of the people had been "deceived" or "suppressed" or "manipulated".

THE SERIES of outrages in January, perpetrated by Croat separatist terrorists against newspaper offices, trains, and a Yugoslav airliner, and

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costing 28 lives, did the rest. As so often in the past, the Croats' case became thoroughly discredited. Not one self-respecting Western intellectual raised his voice in defence of the students and intellectuals in prison, nor on behalf of the professors and the judges who were summarily dismissed. By the beginning of the Belgrade party conference in late January, the Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Times* hailed the successive waves of resignations, dismissals, and expulsions (affecting officially 755 office-holders, in reality an extimated 2,000 to 3,000 people at all levels) as a "thoroughly democratic step". . . .

THE DESCRIPTION of what most Croats feel to be a national tragedy as a "democratic purge" has, I know, outraged a group of Anglophile intellectuals in Zagreb. Yet this attitude does, I suppose, have a respectable historic lineage from Neville Chamberlain's famous 1938 reference to the "people of whom we know nothing" to Winston Churchill's words in the House of Commons in 1945: "We have no special interest in the political régime which prevails in Yugoslavia. Few people in Britain, I imagine, are going to be more cheerful or more downcast because of the future constitution of Yugoslavia. . . ." It was no wonder that, with the worst seemingly over, Western diplomats sighed with audible relief and vied with each other in assuring both their Chanceries and visiting foreign correspondents about Tito, that "the old man has once again saved Yugoslav unity—and after all this is what matters for us all."

The Croats—who in the 19th century already had the reputation of "a people which has, indeed, developed the habit of opposition for opposition's sake further than any in Europe"[1]—have, predictably, lost the battle for international sympathy. As in the 1930s, they are widely regarded as inveterate wreckers of Yugoslavia, blinded by a fanatical chauvinism. If one adds to this the barely veiled boredom with the domestic quarrels of people with unpronounceable names and the fact that the losers in any Communist power-struggle have no chance whatsoever of defending themselves, it becomes only natural that the most drastic and potentially fatal purge in Yugoslavia since 1948 passed virtually unnoticed in a world whose attention is riveted on other danger spots. As one Zagreb student put it to me: "We are once again an occupied province—you all listen only to what is said in Belgrade. . . ."

What, then, has happened and is happening in Yugoslavia? Which of the three Titos should one believe? The one who last autumn repeatedly and publicly proclaimed that stories about a rampant nationalism in Croatia were "absurd" and that individual cases were "overdramatised" by the Yugoslav press and "some people abroad"? Or the one who in December thundered against a counter-revolutionary conspiracy, spoke of "perhaps the most serious phenomenon in our post-war history", evoked the spectres of murder, civil war, and foreign intervention, and referred to the Army's task of defending "the revolutionary achievement"? Or, rather, the latest Tito who now makes light of the whole affair as a mere mishap involving only certain "weaknesses in carrying out the correct party line"? The question is a basic one. How is it that, thirty years after the collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in a desolation of shattered loyalties, after the fratricidal strife of 1941–45 which took the lives of almost a million citizens, the National Problem has again emerged as the central issue of Yugoslav political life, raising grave doubts as to the long-term viability of this multi-national state and its pivotal strategic role in the Balkan and wider Mediterranean area?

EVEN THE VISITOR who thinks he understands this incredibly complex country is torn between conflicting passions and impressions. A young university lecturer spoke quietly with me, but with subdued emotion. Her words echoed against the background music in the Zagreb restaurant where the orchestra was no longer playing national tunes but innocuous waltzes and melancholy central European favourites like *Sag beim Abschied leise, Servus.*

"Don't believe a word of what these parrots at the Central Committee are saying! Only two months ago they were all—or at least pretended to be—in favour of Savka Dabcevic-Kucar, Miko Tripalo and their line. Now they are all as unanimously against it. Did you see the headlines that Tito had received 'a large group of active and retired generals' on the eve of the plenary meeting of the Central Committee? It was a coup of the Serbian generals. This is a signpost for the future after Tito dies. We have lost our battle for the Croat national cause. Perhaps we never had a chance. But now the Serbian gendarmes will impose law and order—just like forty years ago. . . ."

If one goes on to penetrate the curtain of glum silence and deep-seated fear, one gathers the same opinions from a wide variety of people, writers, taxi-drivers, students, engineers. The national pride of most Croats has been deeply offended. Their present mood of inward-looking self-pity is in striking contrast to the national

[1] C. A. Macartney, *Hungary,* (1962), p. 189.

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euphoria which reigned in Croatia until the purge of the top leadership and their associates. The frenzied "national revival", as it then was, had to be seen to be believed, for instance the open-air meeting of about 200,000 people last May in the same Republic Square where last December, day after day, students were beaten up by the militia. Ostensibly celebrating the 30th anniversary of the uprising against the Axis occupiers, the crowd repeatedly interrupted Savka Dabcevic-Kucar's speech, applauding and chanting "LONG LIVE FREE CROATIA!" Many held posters which read: "SAVKA, TRIPALO – WE ARE WITH YOU." Nothing could illustrate the Orwellian character of the purge better than the remark made by Tripalo's successor, Jure Bilic, at a Party meeting in February: "There were some 150,000 people at that Zagreb meeting. But

"Democracy Does Not Apply to Those Who Oppose. . . ."

WE, in the League of Communists, have been rather inert in the last several years. I could say that I have often spoken about this, but that my words have remained a voice in a wilderness. And now I must say that I foresaw that something serious would happen if we Communists failed to really tackle the job and be as we once were. We numbered 12,000 when we organized the national rising, and we won the War. And hundreds of thousands of Communists emerged from the War who won the right to be Communists in the struggle.

Things went as they should for some time after the War, until the Sixth Congress. I want to tell you, Comrades, that I was rather dissatisfied about the Sixth Congress. It did not please me, but I yielded: and this was the first step on the road towards gradually making the League of Communists, so to speak, a little more passive, so that now the people do not know why the League of Communists exists because it is not allowed to interfere in anything. It must not interfere in anything. Everything will progress smoothly and democratically and the high level of consciousness will regulate all this.

SOCIALISM CANNOT BE BUILT without a League of Communists, an ideologically well-versed League of Communists, and without trade unions which represent the political organisations, as I said, of the working class. That is, the League of Communists is an ideological and political organisation of the entire country, that is, of all people, including the working class and all other sections of the population, and the trade unions are the first and most immediate political organisation of the working class. Socialism cannot be built without these kind of organisations, these kind of strong organisations. It is impossible to build it. I say to you openly that without the League of Communists in Yugoslavia, that is, if the League of Communists continued to move in this downward direction, this Yugoslavia would break up. It would break up, or rather, it would be prey to someone, and the only question would be who that would be.

But the League of Communists must again become, and I think that it will now be and has already started to be what it should be, that is, the cohesive force of our socialist community and a guarantee of its strength. It must not only be an ideological directing force, but at times must even be somewhat firmer towards those who would fail to adhere to the policy of the Party, that is, the policy adopted and inaugurated in the top leaderships. And all our top leaderships are composed of representatives from all our Republics and regions. Well, you see, we have there at the top of the Party—just as you have in your trade unions—the Presidium and the Executive Bureau, and in them we have equal numbers of representatives from all Republics. And when a decision is adopted by these leaderships, or when decisions are made by them, then these decisions must be accepted by all Communists throughout Yugoslavia. Those who do not accept decisions of this kind and who would move against these decisions must get out of the Party, and not only out of the Party, but must also leave the positions which they occupy.

UNTIL NOW WE HAVE HAD a somewhat liberal attitude in all this, but liberalism is not worth anything when it comes to these ups-and-downs and when the class enemy comes as close as your nose. There can be no liberalism here.

One comrade said a little earlier that this is democracy and so forth. I have said a hundred times already that democracy is only for those who follow the socialist course, who follow this course of the building of a socialist society, that is, a self-managing society such as we are building.

And democracy does not apply to those who oppose this course.

Tito

to the Presidium of the Council,
Jugoslav Trade Union Federation,
18 December 1971

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148,000 did not applaud. Of the 2,000 alleged students 70 per cent were misled. . . . " Young people were seen with the Croat coat-of-arms stitched to the sleeves of their shirts or jackets, and they sang old patriotic songs. The Croat leaders were riding on the crest of popular enthusiasm because they were standing up publicly for the "national interest"—albeit maintaining staunchly that Croatia could only exist within the Yugoslav Federation.

MANY PEOPLE UNDOUBTEDLY welcomed the swift purge in December. Some 700,000 Serbs (about 15 per cent of the Republic's population) live in Croatia. They observed the "national renaissance" around them and vividly recalled the nightmares of the War when reckless chauvinism culminated in the gruesome massacre of Serbs (and of Jews) by the Croat Ustasha terrorists.

"You cannot imagine the political and spiritual terror that silenced every criticism of that hysterical, irrational nationalism", a Zagreb-born Serbian librarian told me. "Ask the man who opened a buffet in Zagreb and was attacked almost every week by drunken hooligans simply because he was a Serb. Or the qualified X-ray assistant who was the only applicant for a job and didn't get it—because she was a Serb. Or the secondary school teacher who nearly lost her position for saying *tacka* (full stop) instead of *tocka* as it is said in Croatian." Others tell stories about armed peasants guarding their properties in the mixed areas, and the various efforts for a totalitarian unanimity by the exclusion of "alien" elements.

"Rubbish!", retorted my Croat friends. "Why should the Serbs be afaid when they constitute the bulk of the Militia and State Security here? The commanding General of the Zagreb military district is a Serb, 80 per cent of the entire officer corps are Serbs. . . . Apart from a handful of idiots, no one is a threat to the Serbs.

"Our difficulties come only from our refusal to be lorded over by the Serbs—in our own republic. . . . As to the ridiculous charges of 'counter-revolution', can any sane person assume that General Bobetko (who lost four brothers in the National Liberation War), or General Sibl (the chairman of the Veterans' organisation and a People's Hero), or Miko Tripalo (who at the age of 17 fought against the German occupiers and has a Serbian wife) have suddenly become the tools of chauvinistic separatists?"

How can we comprehend these national hatreds? The emotional and psychological tensions between these two closely related and yet so different Slav nations—the Serbs (over 8 million) and the Croats (about 4·5 million)—have a long history punctuated by many excesses. These two largest nations of Yugoslavia have always been separated from each other by different religions (the Serbs are Orthodox, the Croats Roman Catholic)—different alphabets (Cyrillic versus Latin)—and, above all, by startlingly different historical experiences, political conceptions, and personal values.

There have always been two main currents in Croat politics which provide the historical background to what is still called the "Croatian question." Paradoxically, the "Yugoslav idea" (or the union of the South Slavs) originated in 19th-century Croatia, then under Hungarian and Austrian rule. It triumphed in 1918, and it was subsequently reaffirmed by the Communist partisans during the ordeals of World War II. The other principal thread that can be traced from the mid-19th century to the present is so-called "pure" Croat Nationalism, fired by the dream of a revived independent Croat state which disappeared almost 900 years ago. Yugoslavia's history suggests that whenever and in whatever form Belgrade tampers with the roots of Croat national identity and dignity, it opens the floodgates of aggressive Croat nationalism.

Those who wonder at the dramatic resurgence of "tribal nationalism" tend to forget that modern Yugoslavia was born only in 1918 on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It was a group of Croat-Dalmatian statesmen who were instrumental in the creation of the "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes." But the Croat people soon felt that it had been cheated of its rights. The Serbian ruling élite regarded the new state of different nations and minorities as a "Greater Serbia" and consequently considered any demands for national autonomy as "anti-state activity." The Croatian question (or more precisely, the conflict between Serbian hegemony and Federalism) remained the central problem, compared to which all other burning domestic issues paled to insignificance. The Macedonians, the Montenegrins, the Albanians, *et al.* were in fact treated as second-class citizens. King Alexander's royal dictatorship in 1929 changed the new state to the "Kingdom of Yugoslavia", but Yugoslavism was merely a fig-leaf for unbridled Serbian military and police rule. The sad truth was that by the time of the fateful spring of 1941, when the Nazis and their vassals attacked, most of the Croats had come to hate their Serbian rulers even more than the alien northern aggressors.

There followed, during World War II, the establishment of a Fascist Croat puppet-state and a series of unspeakable massacres of the Serbs of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (the

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latter region was added to the new state as compensation for the loss of Dalmatia to Italy); many Serbs had taken to the forests and provided the best fighters for Tito's first partisan brigades. Subsequently the *Chetniks,* who were Serb nationalists, repaid in kind the atrocities against their kinsmen. It was the continuation of a dramatic vendetta that, in the perhaps flippant words of an American scholar, "even a librettist for Verdi would have found complex." A liberation war against the foreign invaders became inextricably linked with a social revolution against the old order but also with an ongoing simultaneous Civil War between Serbs and Croats, itself further complicated by periodic clashes between other national and religious groups (*e.g.* Muslims and Albanians).

FOR TWO DECADES AFTER the Communist seizure of power, the national problem appeared to have been "solved" as well as possible in a multi-national state. Post-war Yugoslavia was deliberately created along Federal lines. The six republics and two autonomous provinces (belonging to the Republic of Serbia) were given internal autonomy and the constitutional right "to self-determination, including the right to secession." The Yugoslav Communist party also received a "federal structure." But when the competitive forces of economic and administrative decentralisation started to operate in earnest, the old conflict between Belgrade-based centralism and the regional forces of federalism reappeared in a new form first in the economic field and then in the political domain. Instead of restraining the deep national cleavages, from the early 1960s on the Party itself became the carrier of centrifugal trends, and the Republics' party leaderships emerged as centres of nationalistic dissent.

Many of the destructive factors at work are similar to the instabilities which can be found elsewhere; the contradiction between an antiquated political superstructure and the socio-economic base; the challenge of a rapidly expanding industrial society to the hierarchic modes of decision-making by a self-perpetuating bureaucratic oligarchy; major demographic changes and rapid urbanization creating a multiplicity of problems, especially in housing and education; the increasing alienation of the technocrats and the youth from "the system"; the disenchantment of the cultural élite; the generational conflict and an amorphous sense of social disorientation.

In Yugoslavia, however, such dilemmas—how to combine economic efficiency with social justice, or growth with stability—are embedded in a unique multi-national fabric. This largest of the Balkan countries has a population of over 20 million, is composed of six republics and two autonomous (and also multi-national) provinces, five nations and a dozen-odd nationalities. While the Western areas such as Slovenia and parts of Croatia are already approaching the development level of neighbouring Austria, large regions in the South remain with one foot (at best) in the last century and (at worst) in the middle ages. About 40 per cent of the territory is regarded officially as "underdeveloped." Thirty-five per cent of the Yugoslav population produced only one-fifth of the total Gross National Product. As Mrs Latinka Perovic, the secretary of the Serbian party, recently remarked:

> As long as the per-head national product in Slovenia is $1,150 and a mere $150 in Kosovo [the autonomous province mainly inhabited by Albanians] every economic question, for example the problem of jobs, is turned into a national problem.

When 30,000 Zagreb students launched a ten-day strike in late November, they demanded a stop to the "plundering of rich Croatia" by the Federal Bureaucracy (the usual euphemism for Serbian supremacy). It coincided with a class struggle between the "have" and the "have-not" regions. When I spoke with Macedonians or Bosnians, I heard only complaints that their so-called progress had not been greater, that "the development gap is larger than ever." The smouldering conflict between the different republics and regions, and the clash between centralism and federalism, is obviously the catalyst of all social tensions. As a regular visitor to Yugoslavia, I heard again and again the same unofficial statistics purporting to show the "losses" of one region and the "gains" of another. And the mere fact that many people passionately believe that they *are* being discriminated against is, surely, politically much more significant than the "objective realities" of a given situation.

This applies also to Belgrade which is the capital of both Yugoslavia and Serbia. Despite the proportional representation of the nations and areas in the important Party and Governmental bodies, the bureaucracy that holds the reins of political, financial and military power in the capital, and implements the decisions made at the top, consists mainly of Serbs (over two-thirds of the Federal officials). The presence of a handful of "token" Croats or Slovenes in the highest echelons cannot dent the deeply ingrained image of a hateful Belgrade: the centre in which the Serbs—and their closest kinsmen, the Montenegrins (a mere 3 per cent of the total population accounting for 15 per cent of the "leading federal employees")—are taking full advantage of patronage as a time-honoured political weapon. Since Belgrade is so widely

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regarded as the symbol of "Great Serbian hegemony" and of "bureaucratic centralism", Professor Branko Horvat, a noted economist, recently suggested the creation of an "extra-territorial" capital. This would entail the transformation of the federal administrative centre and residential suburb on the northern side of the river Sava, called New Belgrade, into an independent entity on the pattern of Washington in the District of Columbia. . . .

This "nationalism" is both the consequence and the cause of a profound political, economic and social crisis which for many years now has been subjecting the country to strains and stresses. Three constitutional changes in the last seven years, two abortive Economic Reforms, and three unsuccessful medium-term Plans in a decade reflected the attempts to strike a viable and mutually acceptable balance between the nations, republics, regions and pressure groups. Compared to all other Communist-ruled countries Yugoslavia is a consumers' paradise. Its overall economic record with a 7 per cent annual growth-rate between 1950–1970 is impressive. But the country has paid a heavy price for uncontrolled inflation and the vicious circle of "stop-go" policies in the form of two currency devaluations within the last year, and a severe balance-of-payments deficit. There has also been massive emigration. What has emerged is, in fact if not in name, a "Seventh Republic" comprising the 800,000 Yugoslavs working abroad.

THE SO-CALLED YUGOSLAV ROAD to socialism is really a unique series of experiments in industrial self-management and administrative decentralisation through the device of workers' councils and communes. When they began to show signs of success, however, they tended to get away from their creators. What seems to outsiders a "chaos" is in fact the built-in contradiction between the single-party political dictatorship and the economic and administrative system created by this dictatorship. The dynamics of society have been running well ahead of the Party's capacity to dispense freedom in general without sooner or later committing institutional suicide. What in a nationally homogeneous country would be a "normal" political-social conflict has here automatically become a national problem.

In an atmosphere of "*Enrichissez-vous, Messieurs*", thousands of luxurious cottages have been going up on the Adriatic coast and the number of cars has nearly doubled within three years to 800,000. But, at the same time, stark contrasts between the conspicuous consumption of the new "middle class" (comprising the upper layers of Federal and Republican bureaucracies, the managers, bank directors, doctors, lawyers, artists and private entrepreneurs) and the low living standards of large segments of the urban working class inflame social tensions.

And the Party? Is it still an ideological vanguard, a guiding force and initiator of progressive social development? It has become the shield and stronghold of the officials, administrators, clerks, the "technical and humanistic intelligentsia", and the Army officers. These groups account for over half of the one million members, while the proportion of blue-collar workers has dropped from 46 per cent in 1960 to 30 per cent at present. Thus, when the philosophers of the "New Left", grouped around the Zagreb bi-monthly, *Praxis*, make their radical demands that

> the League of Communists should eliminate from its ranks the antagonistic and hostile elements, recruited from the bureaucracy, middle class and technocracy (which is essentially the same thing)

they call in fact for the destruction of the entire political superstructure, After all, the Party and the ruling bureaucracy are one and the same thing.

Throughout the Tito epoch—and especially since the 6th congress in 1952 and the subsequent "Djilas affair"—the Party has won an Empire and not yet found a role. It is now attempting to preserve itself as a unifying force through radical reform. Faced with burning issues, however, as one Slovenian scholar told me, "the Party could offer neither political nor economic but only rhetorical solutions." There remains a yawning gap between lofty principles and disappointing practice, and the personal and group frustrations have gradually become projected on to the nations and their protagonists, the regional Party leaderships. To put it bluntly, the Party has become "nationalised" and not democratised. The ideological and political vacuum has been filled by traditional nationalism.

Behind the unending disputes over the primacy of Nation or Class in last year's constitutional debates was the unspoken question: should loyalty to "nation" be stronger than loyalty to "class" (*i.e.* to the all-Yugoslav party dictatorship)? The fight is, of course, over the sharing-out of the "federal cake." The "central money-bag" has, first slowly then irresistibly, released age-old historical and emotional tensions. The parties in the various Republics were able to broaden their popular support to the extent that they were standing up for the interests of "their own people." In this multi-national state, however, the intra-Party battle for securing the levers of political and economic decision-making has lifted the bickering over "clear accounts" to the

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level of a national crisis. By 1970 it was abundantly clear that, as King Alexander said sadly a generation before, "the machine no longer works." Worse still, the old age of Marshal Tito (he turned 80 in May) has injected the element of an impending succession crisis into an already extremely tense situation.

Last year's constitutional reform gave increased decision-making powers to the republics and provinces; it introduced the principle of parity representation (regardless of the size of the republic's population); and it set up a collective state presidency (with the chairmanship rotating annually after Tito's retirement). It intended to cool frayed tempers and to transform the Federal state into what is in fact a Confederation. The one single centre has been replaced by "6 + 2" (the republics and the two provinces) and the Federal government by a new coalition of republican representatives. Yet the apparent end of the troubles has turned out to have been the beginning of the present acute crisis. Regardless of the new amendments and structures, the Yugoslav leaders have not been able to solve the basic dilemma of how to provide "maximum equality" for all republics and provinces without destroying the Federal state.

The deadlock over the liberalisation of the foreign exchange, foreign trade, and the banking system particularly upset the Croats. Croatia provides 28 per cent of the Yugoslav *GNP*, almost 40 per cent of the foreign exchange income, and 65 per cent of the invisible inflow—but is allowed to retain only a fraction of the hard currencies earned there and disposes of a mere 17 per cent of the credit potential. The justified economic grievances poured oil on the fires of aggressive Croat nationalism. The concessions (partly made, partly promised) helped only to whet the Croat appetite for more rather than to satisfy it. This, in turn, provoked a Serbian "backlash"—since most Serbs feel that through the creation of a "phoney" Montenegrin nation and republic, and the setting-up of two provinces, their ancient state and their role as the "leading nation" have been nullified.

To add insult to injury, even in Kosovo province, a part of the Republic of Serbia, the Serbs are subjected to pressure by the one-million Albanian minority which is beginning to assert its local numerical superiority. Finally, the national conflict spilled over into the neighbouring republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina where Serbs outnumber Croats two-to-one with a large Muslim group poised precariously in the middle. Here even apparently irrelevant linguistic arguments (*viz.* a "creeping Serbianisation" of the Croat literary language) aroused passions and evoked the memories of the reciprocal massacres of a not-so-distant past. The quarrel, as a Bosnian writer put it to me, "always starts with the language and ends with the knife. . . ."

THE YOUNG CROAT LEADERS were the driving force of the constitutional reform, and they relied more and more on the support of what Miko Tripalo called a "national mass movement." This was in fact a power battle within the Party in which such political pragmatists as Savka, Dabcevic-Kucar, Tripalo and their friends intended to use the "pure" Croat nationalists as political tools. The temporary allies, however, got out of control. The membership of *Matica Hrvatska*, the 130-year old Croat cultural organisation, jumped from 1,200 to 30,000 within a year, and the number of its branch organisations doubled. Its new weekly, *Hrvatski Tjednik*, launched only last April, was sold out regularly, and its circulation of 100,000 copies surpassed that of the Party daily in Croatia. When Croat intellectuals began to clamour publicly for a Croatian Army and argued that Croatia had been freer even under the hated Hungarian governor, Count Khuen-Hedervary, in the last century (because the "inviolability of the Croatian state rights" was officially recognised), the majority of the Yugoslav political leadership and above all the military High Command saw all this as a resurrection of the intransigent, virulent, and expansionist Croat nationalism, and as a prelude to the "break-up of Yugoslavia." The student strike of last November was the final straw. It persuaded a hesitant Tito to give in to the combined pressure of the Army, the frightened Serbs in Croatia, and the disgruntled (and envious) local *apparatchiks*. A "surgical operation" was carried out.

In May the former Croat top officials were "unanimously" expelled from the Party by the Central Committee. Trials are scheduled to start against two groups of "counter-revolutionary" students and intellectuals during the summer and criminal proceedings have been initiated against the two previous Party chiefs of Dalmatia.

Regardless of the grave tactical blunders committed by the former Croat leaders, it is difficult to believe that they were helpless prisoners or tacit accomplices of "counter-revolutionary separatist conspirators." Marshal Tito decided to purge the same people whom he had publicly eulogised last autumn. It seemed to be the lesser evil as compared to the danger of general turmoil in Yugoslavia as a whole. In the short run, the situation may well have been stabilised. In the long run, however, the faith of many Croats in the "New Yugoslavia" may have suffered a mortal blow. As Miko Tripalo, now accused of

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"*leaderstvo*" (a new gem in Yugoslav party jargon), told me: "Yugoslavia is not powerful if the Belgrade centre is strong—Yugoslavia is strong if all our nations are happy. . . ."

After the "nationalisation" of the Party (and of the youth) and following the Croat upheaval, the Army, one of the strongest in Europe, regards itself (and is so seen by many, including Marshal Tito) as the only remaining effective instrument for unifying the country. Never since World War II have the Generals been so visibly active in politics—issuing almost daily exhortations for "more energetic action" against nationalists, chauvinists and counter-revolutionaries. Still, the Army, with the Serbs accounting (as Dr Bakaric tried to convince me) not for 80 per cent but "only" for 70 per cent of the officers, is widely regarded by the Croats as well as the smaller nations and minorities as a potential instrument of "Great Serbian hegemony" and "ruthless centralism."

It would be unwise to speculate about the future or to draw summary and oversimplified conclusions. Even after Tito's departure, the country may drift along, muddling through from year to year, tension-ridden but held together by the self-interest of the national units and their fear of an even more precarious future outside the common roof. The real test for the political, social, and military cohesion of the Yugoslav state would come in the case of a Soviet attack. Since Prague 1968 this is no longer an "unthinkable", if unlikely, contingency. If there is continued domestic upheaval, however, it is perfectly conceivable that the Army would play a crucial role in a power struggle and emerge as the real master behind the façade of an "all-Yugoslav Party Centre."

THE DRAMA IN CROATIA undoubtedly marks a watershed in post-war Yugoslav history. Arrests, dismissals, and a campaign of vituperation are bound to unite the great majority of Croats more strongly than ever. Only truly radical economic reforms, coupled with meaningful measures of liberalisation, could gradually eradicate the basic roots of the national tensions. But the attacks on those enlightened Macedonian and Slovenian politicians who at one time supported the fallen Croat leaders, and the intrigues against the handful of outward-looking Party leaders in Serbia, raise the ominous spectre of a general retrenchment. Half-a-century after its birth Yugoslavia's future still depends on the great unsolved problem of "unity in diversity", and nothing would be more short-sighted than to mistake the dramatic end of an act for the end of the play.

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Letter from Santiago

Allende's Chile

By Robert Moss

IN THE TWENTY MONTHS or so since Chile's Marxist president, Dr Salvador Allende, took office, political slogans have sprouted from the whitewashed walls of Santiago like fungus. The young Communists of the Ramona Parra brigade, the young Socialiets of the Elmo Catalan brigade, and the would-be guerrillas of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (Mir) turn out each night to do battle with the paint-brush. But the Left no longer has a monopoly of pavement artistry. Among the clenched fists and Cuban flags is sprinkled the sinister cartouche of the right-wing movement *Patria y Libertad*—a kind of compromise between a spider, a skull-and-crossbones, and a swastika. One of them was even found daubed on the wall of the President's private residence. And among the repetitive catchwords of the Left—"CUBA IS NOT ALONE," "THE PEOPLE ARE AT WAR WITH FASCISM"—is a new and chilling phrase. The words *Ya viene Djakarta* ("Djakarta is coming") are exotic and at first incomprehensible on a Santiago wall. But they were quickly explained to me by a Chilean friend. "You remember what happened to the Communists in Indonesia after the generals threw out Sukarno? It is a warning. . . ."

The slogans—the only trace of colour among the low grey walls and dusty streets along the road from the Pudahuel airport—are the first image of Chile for the outsider. Coming back to Santiago after a year's absence, I found them strangely menacing, even at the end of a wonderful summer in which it was hard to take the idea of civil war seriously. Most sensible people had gone off to the beach resorts along the Pacific Coast, to lie in the sand and eat oysters or go yachting in the rough seas off Algarrobo. Under a hot sun, the Chileans, who are probably the most politically sophisticated and least violent nation in Latin America, seemed even less capable of shooting each other than usual.

But the first few months of this year may prove to have been the swansong of the old Chile. Outside the pleasurable little world of the Grand Hotel at Zapallar and the Yacht Club at Algarrobo, where each woman and each pisco sour seems better than the last, I returned to a country that is lurching into a major political crisis. The impending confrontation may still be headed off in the classical Chilean way—by backroom compromise. After all, the historians remind us, the men who have ruled Chile throughout most of this century have been radical for about two years out of six; they usually spent the first third of their terms in office trying to change things, and the remaining two-thirds trying to pick up the pieces and put the lid on inflation. But today tempers are running high among these "Englishmen of Latin America." The impatience of the wild men amongst the Mir and Dr Allende's own socialist party seems to know no bounds, while the patience of many of the men they like to label "the bourgeois opposition" has been stretched to the limit. People have begun to talk seriously about the possibility of Marxist autocracy, a military coup, or a messy and protracted Spanish-style civil war.

THE WAY THAT Dr Allende's Marxist experiment turns out matters to all of us in a way that the merry-go-round of military juntas in a country like Bolivia or Guatemala does not. It has been said that Latin America is a laboratory for the Revolutionary Left, that it is here (as the "people's wars" of post-war Asia recede into history) that new techniques of guerrilla warfare and urban terrorism are being devised and perfected by armed groups like Uruguay's Tupamaros. It may be that Chile is in the same way a laboratory for Western democracy. Walled off from the rest of the continent by the mountain wall of the Andes and by one of the world's harshest deserts, Chile's tradition of political democracy is matched only by tiny Uruguay within Latin America, and its standards of living and education are among the highest in the continent. Apart from the Indian population of the south, it is also a singularly European society, and the names of Irishmen and Germans, Englishmen and Poles, figure as

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prominently in the history-books as those inherited from Spanish colonists.

These are reasons why Chile's political problems are closer to those of France and Italy than to those of (say) Brazil or Central America. The way things work out in Chile will help to resolve some enormous dilemmas. Is Marxism compatible with democracy? Is political democracy possible without a strong private sector in the economy? Is state control of basic industries desirable for its own sake? These are some of the questions that are floating over Santiago. Many liberals will find it difficult to accept the answers that now seem to be in front of them. It is important not to pass judgment too soon. But I was astonished by the difference between what I discovered in Chile last February and the situation I encountered almost exactly a year before.

In less than two years, Dr Allende's government has created enormous economic problems and a new climate of class hatred. At the start of last year, a few months after he came to office, Dr Allende seemed to be securely in the saddle, playing off the six political parties that then made up his Popular Unity coalition against each other, and skilfully courting the armed forces with honours and pay rises. The murder of General Schneider, an apolitical commander-in-chief, by right-wing extremists had been used to discredit the conservative opposition, and the main opposition parties were divided and faction-ridden. Like many outsiders, I then believed that the Popular Unity government might help to bring about necessary reforms so long as the wild men in Dr Allende's own Socialist party could be restrained. The Communists in command of the economic ministries clung to outmoded Stalinist formulas for state control, but were conservative in comparison with extremist groups outside the government like the Mir. I spent a fascinating morning in the restaurant of the Senate house with Volodia Teitelboim, the leading Communist theorist and an intimate of Fidel Castro, who outlined his party's strategy with disarming moderation and considerable aplomb until a group of National senators strolled past. Then he suddenly exploded: "But I will tell you one thing! These gentlemen with fine colonial names must go."

All the same, it was hard to imagine class war in Chile a year ago. When I first met him at his house in the Avenida Tomas Moro, informally dressed and lolling back in his rocking chair, flanked by an admiral in full dress, a dazzling secretary and a gang of young thugs from the presidential guard flaunting automatic weapons and sunglasses, I was greatly struck by Dr Allende's diplomatic poise and his mastery of the art of *divide et impera*. It showed in the most trivial things, like knowing how to separate Europeans from Americans. When I started to speak in faulty Spanish (an American was also present) Dr Allende smiled and asked me to speak in English "so we can hear it as it should be spoken, and not as our American friends speak it." Dr Allende showed himself to be a superb manipulator in his first few months in office, but today more than the talents of a political fixer are needed to control the situation.

The six original parties in the Popular Unity coalition splintered into eight. The leaders of the Radical Left Party (Pir) a breakaway group from Carlos Morales' Radical Party, resigned from the government in April in protest at what they regarded as Dr Allende's unconstitutional course. The tactical alliance between the opposition Christian Democratic and National parties was cemented by two by-election victories in the provinces of Linares, Colchagua, and O'Higgins early this year. Eduardo Frei, the former president, was reinforced in his position as the one leader acceptable to all opposition parties when he became the target for a series of vitriolic personal attacks in the Government-orientated press.

But beyond the manoeuvres of the parliamentary opposition, there is a new mood of resistance among the middle people in Chile—the small farmers and shopkeepers who have been injured by the reckless extension of state control over the economy, the housewives and hotelkeepers who can only buy meat two days a week. Any casual visitor will be struck by just how outspoken the neighbourhood opinion-formers (bar-tenders, newspaper-vendors, shopkeepers) have become. Not content with telling me he was out of stock, the stallkeeper on the pavement just opposite La Moneda, the presidential palace, delivered a tirade: "How do you expect to find cigarettes under this government? . . ." The splendid septuagenarian widow who kept a seedy hotel at Collipulli on the road south addressed all and sundry over breakfast: "Since they expropriated that German family, you can't get milk around here any more. The government gives the children a white powder instead that gives them diarrhoea. . . ."

These random reactions, of course, are only straws in the wind. To grasp the situation as a whole, one has to realise that there are three separate battles being waged in Chile today. The first is the political struggle, which centres on Dr Allende's quarrel with congress. Second, there is the contest for control of the economy. And finally, there is the armed struggle: the test of strength between the para-military groups of

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both political extremes that could lead to an open confrontation that would involve the Army.

FROM THE TIME he was elected, Dr Allende has had to contend with a hostile Congress. The three main opposition groups (Christian Democrats, Nationals, and Radical Democrats) hold the majority in both the Senate and the Assembly, and now that the Radical Left Party has crossed the floor, they need only one more vote to hold a two-thirds majority in the upper house. Hemmed in by a hostile parliament, Allende has revived half-forgotten laws in order to attack private enterprise by executive action. He has also encouraged the state development corporation, *Corfo*, to use public funds to buy up shares. The man behind Allende's strategy for by-passing parliament is Eduardo Novoa, a shrewd lawyer who is in some ways the Kissinger of the régime. The opposition has fought back sporadically, but was foiled in its attempts to impeach individual ministers, including José Tohá, the present defence minister.

Now it has mounted a frontal assault. The Hamilton bill that was passed in February requires the president to secure congressional approval for each takeover of a private company. It is retrospective, so that its effect would be to de-nationalise all concerns that have come under state control since last October. Although most constitutional lawyers agree that Allende has to accept the act as binding or hold a plebiscite[1] he has refused to accept what would amount to the reversal of his entire economic strategy. On the other hand, he has been visibly reluctant to go to the people, since he cannot be sure of bettering the 36 per cent of the 1970 vote in the teeth of the present food shortages, runaway inflation, and the aggressiveness of the extreme Left. In the eyes of some of his militant supporters, the solution is to go beyond the law—which would be an invitation to military intervention or civil war.

The battle that is being fought for control of the economy is subtler, but just as decisive, as the political struggle. The programme of Pedro Vuskovic, the minister of the economy until June 1972, was not really an economic programme at all, but a strategy for disarming the opposition. Vuskovic is an independent Marxist closely aligned with the Moscow-line Communist Party. If the government carries out his plans to expropriate a new list of 91 companies, the state will control about 80 per cent of industrial production. This would amount to the death of private enterprise, at least in the modern sector of the economy. It would also mean that the opposition parties and the independent press would lose their sources of financial support. Many Chileans have begun to ask themselves whether political democracy is conceivable without a real measure of economic pluralism. The strategy that Vuskovic is following bears a very close resemblance to the orthodox Communist recipe for the concentration of power in the hands of the ruling party that was restated this year by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, the highest ideological arm of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union:

> Having once acquired political power, the working class implements the liquidation of private ownership of the means of production. . . . Historical experience shows that this inevitably leads to the elimination of class antagonisms, to the ever-increasing reconciliation of class interests and the establishment of a relationship of friendly co-operation between all classes and groups of socialist society. As a result of this under socialism there remains no ground for the existence of any opposition parties counter-balancing the Communist Party.[2]

The Chilean *miristas* put this their own way as the process of "undermining the power-bases of the bourgeoisie."

The process of nationalisation that is going on in Chile is concerned with power, not with social or economic reform. The Popular Unity government has failed to create a single new major industry, to import new technology, or to reorganise the companies it has taken over in the interests of efficiency. On the contrary, trained managers and technicians have been replaced with party favourites, as in the notorious case of the Chuquicamata copper mine, confiscated from the Americans last year, which was placed under the control of members of the Communist Party who allowed Left para-military youth brigades to move into the company guest-houses.

At the same time, the government has to contend with better-organised resistance from private businessmen who have set up associations like *Frenap* (Front for the Defence of the Private Sector) and have drawn strength from the example of the *Papelera*, the big newsprint company that fought off official attempts to buy a controlling interest last December. Some imaginative businessmen, like Jorge Ross, have tried to resist state takeover by setting up a system of workers' participation and parcelling out shares. This comes as a particular embarrassment to Sr Vuscovic and the Communists, who have a Stalinist faith in state capitalism, and no time at all for experiments in workers' control.

But then there are people on the far Left in Chile who have never believed in revolution by erosion. Just after Dr Allende won his plurality in the presidential election of 4 September 1970, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (Mir) issued an important statement in which the

[1] Professor Carlos Cruz-Coke argues this convincingly in an article in *El Mercurio*, 27 February 1972.
[2] *Kommunist* (Moscow) No. 3, 1972.

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Popular Unity coalition was compared to the Mensheviks in 1917. "Our strategy of the conquest of power through armed struggle," the *miristas* insisted, "is today more valid than ever, since the confrontation has only been postponed." They promised to sabotage any attempt at compromise between government and opposition, to organise "the poorest layers of society" and "to displace the centre of decision-making from the corridors of congress to the mobilised mass fronts."[3] There is no love lost between the *miristas* and the Communists led by Senator Luis Corvalán, who have frequently attacked "the idiocies of the ultra-left." But the Mir has grown from a marginal grouping of Socialist Party malcontents and would-be urban guerrillas into a dangerous revolutionary organisation that is deeply entrenched in parts of the countryside, the universities and the slum fringes of Santiago.

I spent an afternoon at the "Che Guevara" settlement in the San Pablo suburb of Santiago and found that the *miristas* are already administrating their "liberated zones." The Che Guevara *campamiento* is a collection of wooden huts laid out in a simple grid pattern on land that was originally seized by four Mir commando squads back in August, 1970. Since then, the squatters have been given legal title, a state housing corporation called *Cormu* has provided water and electricity and is building them new high-rise flats, and another state corporation delivers food to the door. At the beginning, there were more than 2,000 families in the settlement; but 800 of them were "weeded out" for "lack of discipline", or "political errors"—as Compañera Natalia the "vice-president" of the *campamiento*, put it to me.

Natalia is in many ways a remarkable woman. Squat, suspicious and middle-aged, she has been a lifeling Socialist Party militant. Offering me water from a wine-bottle (consumption of alcohol is frowned upon, and it is illegal to sell it in the settlement) she outlined her political philosophy. "Armed struggle is inevitable in this country," she insisted. "We are all workers here, but our goal is the liberation of the whole of Latin America." There are regular visits from Cubans, Uruguayans, Bolivians and Argentinians, some of whom help out with political education in the school that has been set up in a collection of wheel-less buses.

At first glance, the mean wooden shacks and mangy yellow dogs would have fitted into the scenery of any slum in any Latin American city. What made the Che Guevara settlement different was the discipline, reinforced by the high wooden walls, the watch-towers, the guards who look at passes and ask questions. No one would admit to any military training being carried out at the camp, but commando groups are sent out regularly to take part in land seizures in other parts of the country. The Che Guevara camp and the other *mirista* enclaves in Santiago—the Pablo Neruda and New Havana camps in particular—are rather more than cases of community self-help with a political flavour. Some people even believe that the *miristas* have a plan to encircle Santiago by converting the people of the slum fringes and staging *tomas* (or land seizures) in affluent commuter suburbs like Las Condes.

But the *miristas*' most spectacular operations have taken place in the south, and it is there that they have also run up against something entirely new in Dr Allende's Chile: a resistance movement that is well-armed, well-organised, and well-led. The confrontation between the *miristas* and farmers' organisations like the *Guardia Blanca* in Cautín makes it hard to accept the recent assertion of General Prats, the commander-in-chief, that there are not "para-military groups" in Chile like those of many other Latin American countries.[4] It is even possible that what has begun as a local conflict could trigger off a broader confrontation in Chile. I took the long road south to Cautín to try to find out how far the process has gone.

THE COUNTRYSIDE around Lautaro is a hell of rough dirt roads. This is the landscape of civil war: broken-down American cars that might be out of some gangster film about Prohibition Chicago kick up the dirt along roads cut up by ricketty wooden bridges where we had to slow our battered Peugeot to a halt. Those plank bridges, overhanging deceptively green and beautiful streams, are perfect spots for ambush. You are always conscious of being watched; the sentries posted at the gate of every farm seized by the Mir guerrillas or Mapuche Indians move in and out of the bushes. Several times, we saw a man watching us from half-a-mile away or more, standing out in the road with his hands on his hips and a hat screwed down over his eyes. By the time we had come within pistol range, he would have slipped away, only to be glimpsed again in the rear-vision mirror after we moved on.

Lautaro itself is a dismal little town of mean wooden shacks, its squalor relieved only by a sunny plaza where we found the local garrison marching the goose-step to the tune of "Colonel Bogey" in honour of the anniversary of the foun-

[3] "The Implications of the Electoral Result for the Revolutionary Left" reprinted as appendix to Régis Debray, *Conversations with Allende* (New Left Books, 1971). See also: "El MIR y el resultado electoral" *Punto Final*, 13 October 1970.

[4] Luis Hernandez Parker subscribes to this view in his article, "La imposible guerra de Mr Moss" in *Ercilla*, 29 March 1972.

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dation of the place by some luckless settlers. They were being addressed by a Mapuche leader, with a prodigious memory for dates, whose hair hung to his shoulders; he seemed a little uneasy, because the local political situation is confused. Two Communist governors of Lautaro have been thrown out in succession, partly due to the energy of a brilliant local lawyer, Sr Alfonso Podlech.

But Lautaro remains the capital of the Mir in the south, and the guerrillas are not as easily evicted as the Moscow-line Communists, who have never made much of a dent on the countryside. There are said to be 1,200 Miristas in the province of Cautín, and two-thirds of them are based in the single department of Lautaro. During the summer vacation, reinforcements move in from the university city of Concepción, where Miguel Enriquez has taken over the leadership of the movement from Luciano Cruz, who died in an accident last year. Outside the sleazy Terraz hotel in Temuco, the provincial capital, we found several buses daubed with slogans (*los buses de los oprimidos*) that had just arrived to lend support to the summer spate of land seizures.

The Miristas and their rural branch, the Revolutionary Peasants' Movement (MCR), have played upon the grievances of the Mapuche Indian—a nation of warriors and nomadic cattle-raisers that successfully resisted the rule of the Incas and staved off the rule of the Spanish colonists for centuries. There have been about 400 *tomas* in the province of Cautín. The general pattern has been for a dozen or 15 Miristas to appear in the late afternoon, or the early morning, at the head of 60 or 70 Indians. The Mapuches often went into battle drunk; now the farmers claim that the guerrillas are giving them drugs. It is hard to sort out fact from legend in a region where civil conflict also has racial undertones—the conflict in Cautín is often between German Chilean settlers and Indians who believe they are repossessing ancestral lands. But there is no doubt that in many cases the Mapuches have been used cynically as political cannon-fodder by the guerrillas. And now that a movement has emerged that has the guns, the discipline, and the will to resist further land seizures, the guerrillas are increasingly leaving the Mapuches to fight it out for themselves.

In Santiago, I had heard rumours about the existence of a vigilante movement of small farmers, the *Guardia Blanca* or "white guard." But no one knew anything very concrete; in Chile, as in many developing countries, the psychological gap between the city and the countryside is immense. What I stumbled across in the south was something new in Dr Allende's Chile—a resistance movement of small farmers who have seen their lives and livelihoods threatened by violent land seizures. Denied protection by the police and armed forces (despite Dr Allende's repeated insistence that he will not tolerate illegal *tomas*) they have taken the law into their own hands.

So far, their operations have been limited to recovering by force property that was taken away from them by force. But the movement is not restricted to one area—it is active in Osorno and Linares as well as in Cautín and has links with the farmers' syndicates—and some of its leaders are highly motivated politically and connected with right-wing organisations like *Patria y Libertad*. An example was set for them by a land-owner called Sr Landarreche who went out with his sons last year and recaptured his farm near Carahue from the *miristas* last year—although it has since been taken away from him again by the official land reform agency, *Cora*. What began as a series of spontaneous actions has now given rise to a disciplined movement.

I spent several days with the chief of the *Guardia Blanca* in Cautín, who began by telling me that he regarded the name of the organisation as merely a joke, a label stuck on by outsiders, since his movement was essentially a movement of *survival* without political ambitions. He told me of how the *Guardia* have organised a system of *recapturas*. When they first went into action, they were taking back farms three or four days after they had been seized by the guerrillas. Now the time-lag has been cut down to two or three hours in many cases, since the farmers discovered that, given more time, the guerrillas were digging trenches and setting up stockades. The *Guardia* can move quickly because they have a system of bush telegraph and a pool of 60 or 70 cars—a great deal of transport in that impoverished province. They can count on the backing of about 600 farmers in Cautín alone.

THE OPERATION that may well go down in the chronicles as the first battle of the *Guardia Blanca* was the recapture of a farm called Santa Ana, outside Lautaro, on the night of 17 February. The Santa Ana farm, owned by the Gonzalez family, covers an area of some 25 basic hectares—far below the legal maximum for an individual holding. About 20 Mapuches were occupying the farm when 60 farmers drove out to reclaim Sr Gonzalez' property. They defended themselves on a hill, but were soon driven off, leaving five dead horses behind. Sr Gonzalez showed me the deep furrows that the *Guardia's* tyres had burned in his pastures.

In many respects, this was an amateurish operation. The man who led it boasted to me that he had fired more than 50 rounds from his own Mauser and that probably more than ten times

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that number of bullets were fired by his side. If this suggests that the vigilantes are not short of ammunition, it is also a sign that they were not worried about wasting it. One of the most significant details in the story was the response of the local *Carabineros*, or rural police, when the Mapuche leaders went before them to make a complaint. The *Carabinero* captain was only too happy to accept Sr Gonzalez' story that he had merely been taking some friends out for a barbecue (*un asado*). After all, since he had been made to stand by while *miristas* took the farm in the first place, why should he get involved when its owner reoccupied it?

Even more striking is the fact that 14 women are said to have led the *Guardia* into battle. No one should ever underrate the vitality of Chilean women. Just as the celebrated "march of the casseroles" (when middle-class women banged their pots and pans in protest against the government's economic policies) brought the opposition into the streets last December, it was again the women who showed the vigilantes the way in the countryside.

The Santa Ana operation was only a beginning. The following night, the *Guardia* took over the Vista Hermosa farm, and there have been several *recapturas* since.

In some parts of the south, the vigilantes have already got the guerrillas on the run. I made a visit to the *asentamiento* Lautaro, the farm that used to be the Mir headquarters in Cautín. I was surprised to find that there were no guards at the gate—it later emerged that the *Guardia* had been taking pot-shots at the *miristas* from their cars. We were able to drive straight down the twisting dirt track to the farmhouses. The *miristas* on this farm were known to be suspicious of journalists, so I had come prepared with a somewhat implausible story that I wanted to buy a pig for a barbecue.

When we pulled up at the biggest farmhouse, which had been festooned with banners and paintings of a Che Guevara-figure brandishing a rifle, no one was in sight. Then we caught sight of a group of four- or five-year-old Mapuche children. As we got out of the car, they started chanting slogans like "*Momio, escucha, el campo esta de lucha* (Reactionary, hear this: the countryside is at war)." Like all serious revolutionaries, the *miristas* have nothing to learn about capturing the minds of the young.

One by one, the *miristas* began to come out of the farmhouses, short, swarthy men in ragged shirts and jeans. These were not trendy young students from Concepción: they were indoctrinated Mapuches who had been left behind to run the farm when the leaders moved on to greener pastures. They had no pig to sell, and some of them laughed out loud when I told my story. My big mistake was to produce a rather complex Japanese camera to try to take their photographs. They ordered us to leave the farm, but as we swung the car around and drove up the hill, three of them raced on ahead and closed the heavy wooden gate in front of us. Within a few minutes, a crowd of fourteen or fifteen were clustered around the car. "You have lied to us," they insisted. "You did not come to buy a pig, but to spy on us. You are *Guardia Blanca*." Our real fear at this stage was that they would search the car, since we had the *mirista* battle-flags that had been captured at Santa Ana and presented to me as a souvenir in the boot—reason enough for our Lautaro friends to spend some time interrogating us. The dangerous thing was that the people on the *asentamiento* were the rump of the Mir, tense and jumpy, like wounded animals at bay. But it was hard for us to take the menace seriously, since many of them seemed more frightened of us than we were of them. And that is probably what persuaded them to let us go.

ONE OF THE BIG QUESTIONS now is whether the *Guardia Blanca* will extend their operations from attacks on those who have seized land illegally to a direct confrontation with the official land reform agency—in other words, with the government itself. That could precipitate a full-scale civil war in the south. But the chief of the *Guardia* is a cautious man (he carries a stop-watch in his pocket, a most un-Chilean habit).

In the eyes of the Left, the *Guardia* are easily branded as a "fascist movement of reaction." Some members are certainly linked with *Patria y Libertad*, whose leader, Pablo Rodriguez (a lawyer who was recently arrested on conspiracy charges), believes in a modified form of the corporate state. But it must be pointed out that the *Guardia* might not have emerged if the government had had the capacity or the desire to give the small farmers of the south justice in the courts and police protection. You have to drive around the isolated farms of Cautín to sense the fear that is in the air.

We drove out to one small farm in the Lautaro district that was just a couple of kilometres away from the Tres Higuelas estate that has become a *mirista* base-camp, and entirely surrounded by land that had been taken over by Mapuches.

The owner, who lives alone with his mother and a dozen Indian labourers, was expecting a *toma* that afternoon. When we arrived, we found a van-load of *Carabineros*—eight men and a lieutenant—parked in front of the farmhouse. I told the officer that I was surprised to find him there, as the police are rarely around when land

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seizures take place. He accepted my cigarettes and told me that he and his men would not be there when the *toma* actually took place. They drove down that road from Lautaro two or three times a day, never stopping at the farm for more than 10 or 15 minutes. "What are eight men against 80 Indians?" Besides, he added, he and his men had steered clear of the Mapuches since they had been stoned by a crowd of women and children in an encampment across the road.

We were given tea and cakes by the lady of the house, Dona Tomasa R., a remarkable battleship of a woman who ruled her kitchen with an iron hand and was resolved to hold on to the last. But the atmosphere inside the farmhouse was tense and stifling. A dense cloud of flies turned in the still air in front of a window facing the bush where Indians had appeared the day before to fire casual shots at the *Carabineros*. There were more flies in that room than I had seen anywhere else in the south in the midst of a prickly summer. Dona Tomasa moved in a world without hope, peopled with premonitions of disaster. "It's been worse than a war of nerves," she told me. "I get so little sleep at night now that there's no time for dreaming." I asked her how she saw the future, and, sinking back into her chair with her arms folded and her eyes half-closed, she replied that she saw "everything being torn down, everything being handed over to the Indians."

In the language of Chilean polemics, Dona Tomasa was a model *momia* (an amazing word that literally means an Egyptian-style mummy, but is now used by everyone, in jest or in earnest, as the synonym for "reactionary"). She lived in a world of the past; she saw the Mapuches, as her settler-father did before her, as a savage force that had to be subjugated. But, set in ways that had grown out of fashion, she was also one of the little people who have been bruised by what is happening on the land in Chile. To get a rounded picture, one must go also to the Mapuche encampments and to the offices of *Cora*, but Dona Tomasa's story is one of the innumerable tragedies of ordinary people caught up in a historical process, one of the incidents in a class war. On her farm, I felt I was watching something elemental, a conflict between forces of nature.

The *Guardia* operations have helped to curb land seizures in the south. Small farmers have reoccupied 80 farms that were taken illegally in Cautín, 40 of them by "methods of direct action." But in some ways the official land reform agency is a more formidable opponent than the Mir. If the farmer has little enough legal protection against *tomas* (since the statutory penalty for seizing a farm is less than for stealing a cow) he is often equally powerless to contest the decisions of *Cora*.

THE COUNTRYSIDE of Chile is not a region of grinding poverty. The redistribution of land that took place under President Frei's administration elbowed out many of the big landowners, so that today less than 5 per cent of Chile's total agricultural capacity is in farms bigger than the 80 basic hectares that is laid down as the legal maximum. In their six years in office, the Christian Democrats took over about 1,400 farms covering 3½ million hectares—many of them in the fertile provinces of the central valley. They organised most of the farms they expropriated as *asentamientos*, or rural co-operatives. In contrast, the Allende government has speeded up the process of land confiscations but has handed property over to state-run *centros* rather than to co-operatives or individual peasants. By the end of last year, *Cora* had taken over nearly as many farms as had been expropriated under six years of Christian Democrat government. This has cut into the quick of Chilean society. The men whose interests are now affected are the little people—not the *latifundistas*.

There are more than 50 pretexts for expropriating a farm—ranging from the vague claim that it is "badly run" (*mal explotado*) to the discovery that someone failed to advertise the setting-up of a family company in a local newspaper two decades ago. The general sense of insecurity is increased by the fact that Socialist Party militants want to make 20 basic hectares the maximum size for an individual holding, and that in much of the country there is no appeal from the arbitrary decisions of *Cora*. The president is compelled by law to appoint three-man agrarian reform tribunals, but there is no set period of time during which they must be named. The result is that the government has been able to evade appointing tribunals in many parts of the country. *Cora* is not only able to decide which farms will be taken over; it decides on whether or not a farmer is entitled to a reserve; and it values his property and equipment. Since *Cora* has been heavily infiltrated by *miristas* and the wilder elements in the *Mapu* (originally a Christian Democrat splinter) its decisions are not always neutral.

AT SALTO DEL LAJA, and along the coast, I met Chileans who were still happy to live for the day. One Hungarian who had fled his native country in 1948, when the Communists took over, told me that he now saw the same thing happening in Chile, and was thinking of migrating to Ireland—of all places!—and to set up a guitar factory! In the meantime, he spent freely and had just used his special qualifications to get a handsome share of the $20 million worth of

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credits that the Hungarians have just made available to Dr Allende.

But there is also a new spirit of resistance, the spirit that brought a quarter-of-a-million people (180,000, according to government estimates) into the streets of Santiago during the UNCTAD conference in April, after my departure, in a "march for democracy" intended to show the strength of opposition to Dr Allende's régime. Over the past months, Dr Allende has shown all the signs of nervous strain. He lost his composure completely when the non-Marxist Radical Left Party (Pir) withdrew from the Popular Unity coalition. His recent decision to start formal talks with the Mir suggests that, disappointed in his "middle strategy" intended to win back the support of some middle-class elements by building up the non-Marxist elements in his government, Dr Allende may now have decided to cast his lot with the far Left. That would mean an even greater polarisation of political forces in Chile. Optimists tend to argue that at heart Dr Allende is a moderate and will turn back if he sees the country approaching violent confrontation.

"Revolutionaries don't have nannies," one opposition leader quipped when Dr Allende attended the funeral of his childhood nurse. "He's the kind of man who turns back when he finds that he has got into a *cul-de-sac*," was how one Christian Democrat put it. And there is something in both those judgments of character.

There is nothing very revolutionary about most of the men in Dr Allende's government—with the possible exceptions of Hernán del Canto, the new Minister of the Interior who is very close to Carlos Altamirano, the fiery leader of Allende's own Socialist Party, and (in a way) Dr Jaques Chonchol, the Minister of Agriculture who was formerly a Christian Democrat and now heads the Christian Leftist group. Most of the men in the cabinet tend to be middle-aged and old hands at parliamentary politics. The political élite in Chile is pretty small, and leaders of opposite tendencies have been meeting each other in the same restaurants and beach-houses for years.

The optimists would add that, apart from Chilean quirks of character, Allende's government is held in check by a hostile congress, by the armed forces, and by an outspoken free press, and that, at the end of the day, the economic changes it has brought about can be reversed by a future government. But things are moving very fast. The conflict between the president and congress, the prospect of a referendum, the worsening economic situation, and the militancy of extremists on both sides could mean that the moment of truth is at hand.

THE OUTCOME WILL VERY MUCH DEPEND on the attitude of the Army. No one can accuse Dr Allende of neglecting his officers. He tours the garrisons and training colleges making speeches and presenting decorations; he has raised wages handsomely; and in the cause of "linking the army with the nation's development" he has made one general his Minister of Mines and put another on the committee that organised the UNCTAD gathering. The courtship of the President may have made the generals more conscious of their power, but there is no sign that it has deflected them from the professional, apolitical traditions of the Chilean armed forces.[5] On the other hand, there are three things that Chilean officers tend to get a little edgy over.

The first is Cuban involvement in the country's politics. Colonel Labbe, the former commandant of the military academy, was sacked not long after his cadets mysteriously came down with a 'flu epidemic during Fidel Castro's visit last year. The visit of the training ship *Esmeralda* to Cuba is said to have been something of a disaster, since the hand-picked groups of Cuban families allowed to visit the ship left it littered with hand-written pamphlets saying things like "*Don't let Chile go the same way!*" Some younger officers complained to me of how "six or seven captains and majors" were given courses in Cuba on delicate subjects like the technique of *coup d'état*.

More unsettling for the man in the barracks is competition from armed civilians. Up in the Andes at his base near Liquiñe, Comandante Pepe, the military chieftain of the Mir (and, incidentally, a wanted criminal) is still running some 400,000 acres as a private fief and turning back army patrols as if he were a sovereign power.

Finally, the most sensitive issue of all is political interference in the barracks. As one Chilean politician remarked to me, "What really made the soldiers act in Brazil in 1964 was leftist agitation among their own troops." Dr Allende has until recently been very scrupulous about not interfering with the military chain of command—or with military intelligence. But the *miristas* have been less cautious. Conscript soldiers have been drawn into rallies in the slum *poblaciones*. And Communist Party documents leaked to the conservative daily *El Mercurio* (and subsequently hotly denied by the party's central committee) suggest that the Communist youth may also have been working on the draftees. One of the documents found in the possession

[5] It must still be remembered that the armed forces have got involved in Chilean politics on several notable occasions: the Navy overthrew the reformist régime of Balmaceda in 1891; the armed forces helped to bring the dictator Ibanez to power in 1926; and divisions in the officer corps paved the way for the short-lived "Socialist Republic" of 1932.

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of Patricio Cueto Román, a 23-year-old CP militant in the Valpariso area, outlines the following "urgent instructions":

> 1. Registration of each draftee in his respective canton, since the central committee states that no comrade of draft age for military service should abstain from doing his term. . . .
> 2. Preparation of a general register of comrades who join the service, including the location, regiment and province. . . . No member may abstain from doing his compulsory military service and the committees must be informed of any member who has not registered or presented himself at the appointed date.
> 3. The comrades must be indoctrinated before joining the service so that they will be aware of their role during this period.[6]

If the document is authentic, it points to a Communist programme of subversion aimed at conscript soldiers and designed to produce a political militia. If that is actually being carried out, it is proof that Chile's Communists are not content to play by the rules of the democratic game. It would also be a fundamental miscalculation, since it would represent the one thing certain to sway the Army leaders from their traditional political neutrality.

PERHAPS ONE REASON WHY so much of the "Chile debate" that is raging in the lecture halls of Paris and New York seems to miss the point is that we are very easily confused by vocabulary. It is very hard for most Westerners to think rationally, for example, when the word "reform" is thrust at them. After all, we have been schooled to think of much of Latin America as the home of brutal oligarchs and downtrodden peasants, where the radical redistribution of land and income is the essential prerequisite for social peace. What I found in Chile makes that stereotype seem laughable.

The government's offensive against private industry and the expropriation of small farmers is not "reform" in any meaningful sense. Certainly, some of the companies involved were badly run. Certainly, more had to be done for the Mapuches and the landless rural labourers who had had no real stake in the Christian Democrats' reforms. But what Dr Allende's government has actually achieved is not reform in a social sense, since it has not led to any new experiments in workers' participation. And many peasants (with that healthy respect for property that is characteristic of peasants) do not rejoice at being transferred from a private farm to a state-run *centro* run by *Cora* bureaucrats.

Nor is this reform in an economic sense, since it has not resulted in technical innovation or more efficient management. The rise in industrial production last year was simply due to the utilisation of unused productive capacity. There has been little new investment, and no attention to bringing in new industries. The food import bill, at the same time, rose to $280 million as agricultural production sagged and stocks of cattle were run down alarmingly fast. Chile's economic problems, admittedly, are partly the result of a huge burden of inherited debt and of market fluctuations in the world price of copper. But a doctrinaire insistence on a rigid system of state capitalism à *la russe* has not helped to solve them. When all the political arguments have been left aside, the big question before Chile is the one before all the developing countries: how do they catch up? Dr Allende's planners are very far from having any answers.

BY THE MIDDLE OF 1972, there were signs that the more reasonable men in Allende's coalition had at last seen the need to slow down the programme of State takeovers in order to raise production and balance the budget, and the Communist Party was pressing for tougher measures against the extreme Left. There were even stories that, at the end of May, Allende had offered no fewer than five cabinet jobs to members of the armed forces at the instigation of the Communists. Chile had provided the world with another extraordinary spectacle: a Moscow-line Communist Party ready to back what might almost have amounted to a military junta under a civilian president.

As it turned out, the Army declined the offer. But afterwards, in mid-June, Allende reshuffled his cabinet and dropped Pedro Vuskovic, his economic commissar. Although left-wing Socialists were stronger than ever in the new administration, the new minister of finance, Orlando Millas, was a cautious and highly orthodox Communist whose opposition to "armed struggle" had led him to criticise Fidel Castro in no uncertain terms back in the mid-1960s. It seemed that, once again, Allende had drawn back from the brink in favour of a "middle strategy" based on the attempt to divide the opposition by courting the favours of left-wing Christian Democrats. To sceptics, there was a case of *réculer pour mieux sauter*—a question of tactics, rather than a basic change of heart.

But the continuing violence in the countryside and the squabble between the Communists and the revolutionary Left suggested an interesting possibility: that, at the end of the day, Allende and the orthodox Left might be forced to do battle with the Mir and its sympathisers. Whether or not Allende would be prepared to move against the far Left, he could not look forward to the March 1973 congressional elections with any confidence on the basis of his government's economic record and its failure to maintain order.

[6] Published in *El Mercurio*, 3 March 1972. See *El Siglo*, 2 March 1972, for the Communist response.

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DOCUMENT

An Unpublished Letter (II)

Bakunin to Nechayev

2nd June, 1870, Locarno

IMAGINE YOURSELF IN THE MIDST OF a successful spontaneous revolution in Russia. The state and with it all socio-political order is in ruins. The people has risen, has taken all it needed and has chased away all its oppressors. Neither law nor power exist any longer. The stormy ocean has burst all dams. This far from homogeneous, on the contrary extremely varied mass, the Russian people, covers the illimitable space of the Russian Empire. It has begun to live and act for itself as it really is, and no longer as it was ordered to be, everywhere in its own way—general anarchy. The enormous quantity of mud which has accumulated within the people is stirred and rises to the surface. In various places emerge a large number of new, brave, clever, unscrupulous and ambitious people who, of course, attempt each in his own way to obtain the people's trust and to direct it to his own advantage. These people come into collision, fight and destroy each other. It seems this is a terrible and hopeless anarchy.

But imagine, in the midst of this general anarchy, a secret organisation which has scattered its members in small groups over the whole territory of the Empire but is, nevertheless, firmly united: inspired by a common ideal and a common aim which are applied everywhere, of course modified according to prevailing conditions: an organisation which acts everywhere according to a common plan. These small groups, unknown by anybody as such, have no officially recognised power but they are strong in their ideal, which expresses the very essence of the people's instincts, desires and demands, strong also in their clearly realised purpose among a mass of people struggling without purpose or plan. Finally, they are strong in their solidarity which ties all the obscure groups into one organic whole, in the intelligence and energy of their members who have managed to create around themselves a circle of people more or less devoted to the same ideal and naturally subject to their influence — these groups will be able to lead the popular movement without seeking for themselves privileges, honours or power, in defiance of all ambitious persons who are divided and fighting among themselves, and to lead it to the greatest possible realisation of the socio-economic ideal and to the organisation of fullest liberty for the people. This is what I call *the collective dictatorship* of the secret organisation. This dictatorship is free from all self-interest, vanity, and ambition for it is anonymous, invisible, and does not give advantage or honour, or official recognition of power to a member of the group or to the groups themselves. It does not threaten the liberty of the people because it is free from all official character. It is not placed above the people like state power because its whole aim, defined by its programme, consists of the fullest realisation of the liberty of the people.

This dictatorship is not contrary to the free development and self-determination of the people or its organisation from below according to its own customs and instincts, for it acts on the people only by the natural personal influence of its members who are not invested with any power and are scattered like an invisible net in all regions, districts, and rural communities and, each one in his own place and in agreement with others, trying to direct the spontaneous revolutionary movement of the people towards a general plan which has been fully agreed and defined beforehand. This plan for the organisation of the people's liberty must firstly be firmly and clearly delineated as regards its main principles and aims in order to exclude any possibility of misunderstanding and deviation by its members who will be called upon to help in its realisation. Secondly, it must be sufficiently wide and human to embrace and take in all the inescapable changes which arise from differing circumstances, all varied movements arising from the variety of national life.

THUS THE PROBLEM IS at present how to organise from elements which we know and to which we have access, this secret collective dictatorship and strength—which could, firstly, disseminate at present a wide popular propaganda, a propaganda which would *really* penetrate among the people, and by the power of this propaganda and by *organisation within the people itself* unite the divided strength of the people into a mighty force which could break the state—and, secondly, which is capable of remaining in being in the midst of revolution itself without breaking apart or altering its direction on the morrow of the people's liberation.

THIS *is the concluding section of Michael Bakunin's letter to Sergei Nechayev recently discovered in Paris by Professor Michael Confino, translated from the Russian by Lydia Bott.*

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This organisation, particularly its basic nucleus, must be composed of persons who are most determined, *most intelligent and as far as possible knowledgeable,* i.e. *intelligent by experience,* who are passionately and undeviatingly devoted, who have, as far as possible, renounced all personal interests and have renounced once and for all, for life, or for death itself, all that attracts people, all material comforts and delights, all satisfaction of ambition, status, and fame. They must be totally and wholly absorbed by one passion, the people's liberation. They must be persons who would renounce personal historical importance while they are alive and even a name in history after their death.

Such complete self-denial is only possible in the presence of passion. It cannot be arrived at by a consciousness of absolute duty, but even less by a system of external control, of restriction and compulsion. Passion alone can bring about this miracle within a man, this strength without effort. Where does passion come from, and how does it arise in a man? It comes from life and arises through an interaction of life and thought; negatively, as a protest hating all that exists and oppresses; positively, in the society of people of the same mind and with the same feelings, as a collective creation of a new ideal. Nevertheless, one must point out that this passion is only real and salutary when both sides, the positive and the negative, are closely connected in it. Hate, the negative side alone, does not create anything, does not even create the power necessary for destruction and thus destroys nothing. The positive side alone will not destroy anything, since the creation of the new is impossible without the destruction of the old, and will not create anything, remaining always a doctrinaire dream or a dreaming doctrine.

DEEP PASSION which cannot be uprooted or shaken, is, therefore, the foundation of everything. Without it, even the wisest of men, even the most honest of men, would not have the strength to carry on to the end the fight against the terrible socio-political power which oppresses us all. He would not have the strength to withstand all the difficulties, possibilities, and (most of all) the disappointments which await him and which he will meet without fail in this unequal and daily struggle. A passionless man would not have the strength, faith, or initiative; he would not have the courage; and this business cannot be carried out without courage. But passion alone is not enough. Passion engenders energy, but energy without sensible guidance is fruitless and absurd. Allied to passion there must be reason, cold, calculating, real and practical, but also based on theory, educated by knowledge and experience, wide-ranging but not overlooking details, capable of understanding and discerning people, capable of grasping the realities, relationships and conditions of social life in all strata of society and in all their manifestations, in their true aspect and sense and not arbitrarily and in a dream, as is often done by my friend, namely, you. Finally, it is necessary to know well both Russia and Europe and the real social and political situation in both. Thus passion, while always remaining the basic element, must be led by reason and knowledge, must not rush aimlessly about but, without losing its inward fire, its fervent inexorability, must become cold and thereby much stronger.

Here is the ideal of the conspirator destined to be a member of the nucleus of the secret organisation

YOU WILL ASK, where are we to find these people, are there many of them in Russia, or even in the whole of Europe? The point is that according to my system not many are needed. Remember that you do not have to create an army but a revolutionary staff. You might find possibly 10 such people who are nearly ready, perhaps 50 or 60 capable of becoming such men and preparing themselves for this role—this is more than enough. I am deeply convinced that you yourself, in spite of all blunders, regrettable and harmful mistakes, in spite of a series of disgusting petty and stupid deceits, into which you were drawn only by a false system, not by ambition, vanity, or self-interest, as many, too many, people begin to believe, you with whom I would be obliged to break and have resolved to do so if you do not renounce this system—you belong to the number of these rare people. *This is the only reason for my love for you, my faith in you in spite of everything, and my patience with you, a patience which, however, is now exhausted.* In addition to all your terrible shortcomings and abortive thinking, I recognised and continue to recognise in you an intelligent, strong and energetic man, capable of cold calculation and, be it from inexperience, ignorance, and frequently from false argument, capable also of complete self-denial. A man passionately and wholly devoted and consecrated to the cause of popular liberation.

Renounce your system and you will become a valuable man; if, however, you do not wish to renounce it, you will certainly become a harmful militant, highly destructive not to the state but to the cause of liberty. But I very much hope that the latest events in Russia and abroad have opened your eyes and that you will want and understand the necessity of joining hands with us on a basis of sincerity. In that case, I repeat, we shall acknowledge you as a valuable man and

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will gladly recognise you as our leader for all Russian activities. But if you are as I described, then surely there will be found in Russia at least ten people like you. If they have not yet been found, look for them and set up a new society with them on the following principles and mutual conditions:

1 To adopt fully, wholly and passionately the above-mentioned programme in *The People's Cause (Narodnoe Delo)*, with additions and clarifications which seem necessary to you.

2 Equality among all members and their unconditional and absolute solidarity—one for all and all for one—with the obligation for each and everyone to help each other, support and save each other to the uttermost, in as much as it is possible without danger of annihilation to the Society itself.

3 Complete frankness among members and proscription of any Jesuitical methods in their relationship, of all ignoble distrust, all perfidious control, of spying and mutual accusations, the absence and a positive strict prohibition of all tattling behind members' backs. When a member has to say anything against another member, this must be done at a general meeting and in his presence. *General fraternal control* of each other, a control which should not be captious or petty and above all not malicious. This type of control must take the place of your system of Jesuitical control and must become a moral education, a support for the moral strength of each member. It must be the basis of *mutual fraternal trust* on which rests all the internal and, therefore, external power of the Society.

4 All weak-nerved, cowardly, ambitious and self-seeking people are excluded from the Society. They can be used as weapons by the Society without their knowledge, but on no account must they belong to its nucleus.

5 In joining the Society, every member condemns himself for ever to be socially unknown and insignificant. All his energy and all his intelligence belong to the Society and must be directed not to the creation of personal social strength, but to the collective strength of the organisation. Each must be convinced that personal influence is powerless and fruitless and that only collective strength can overcome the common enemy and achieve the common positive aim. Therefore collective passion must gradually be substituted for personal passions within each member.

6 Everyone's personal intelligence vanishes like a river in the sea in the collective intelligence and all members obey unconditionally the decisions of the latter.

7 All members are equal; they know all their comrades and discuss and decide with them all the most important and essential questions bearing on the programme of the Society and the progress of the cause. The decision of the general meeting is absolute law.

8 In principle each member has the right to know everything. But idle curiosity is forbidden in the Society as is aimless talk about the business and aims of the Secret Society. Knowing the general programme and the general direction of affairs, no member asks or tries to find out details which are not needed for better execution of that part of the enterprise with which he is entrusted and, if it is not necessary in practice, will not talk with any of his comrades about it.

9 The Society chooses an Executive Committee from among their number consisting of three or five members who should organise the branches of the Society and manage its activities in all the regions of the Empire on the basis of the programme and general plan of action adopted by the decision of the Society as a whole.

10 This Committee is elected for an indefinite term. If the Society—I shall call it the People's Fraternity—if the People's Fraternity is satisfied with the actions of the Committee, it will be left as such; and while it remains a Committee each member of the People's Fraternity and each regional group have to obey it unconditionally, except for such cases where the orders of the Committee contradict either the general programme of the principal rules, or the general revolutionary plan of action, which are known to everybody as all the Brothers have participated equally in the discussion of them.

11 In such a case members of the group must halt the execution of the Committee's orders and call the Committee to judgment before the general meeting of the People's Fraternity. If the general meeting is discontented with the Committee, it can always substitute another one for it.

12 Any member and any group is subject to judgment by the general meeting of the People's Fraternity.

13 Since each Brother knows everything and knows even the personnel of the Committee, the acceptance of a new member among them must be conducted with extreme caution, difficulties and obstacles. One bad choice can ruin everything. No new Brother can be accepted without the consent of all, or at the very least three-quarters of all the members of the People's Fraternity.

14 The Committee divides the members of the Fraternity among the Regions and constitutes Regional groups of leaderships from them. This leadership could consist of one Brother alone, if there are too few members.

15 Regional leadership is charged with organising the second tier of the Society—the *Regional Fraternity*, on the basis of the same programme, the same rules, and the same revolutionary plan.

16 All members of the *Regional Fraternity* know each other, but do not know of the existence of the *People's Fraternity*. They only know that there exists a *Central Committee* which hands down to them their orders for execution through *Regional Committee* which has been set up by it, *i.e.* by the *Central Committee*.

17 As far as possible the Regional Committee is composed exclusively of People's Brothers appointed and replaced by the Central Committee, with at least one People's Brother. In such a case this Brother, with the consent of the C.C., will appoint the two best members of the Regional Fraternity to act jointly with himself as a Regional Committee; but these will not have equal membership rights in so far as only the People's Brother will be in contact with the C.C. whose orders he will pass on to his comrades of the Regional Committee.

18 People's Brothers or Brothers in the regions will seek out from among members of the Regional Fraternity people capable and worthy of being admitted to the People's Fraternity, and will introduce them through the C.C. to the general meeting of the People's Fraternity.

19 Each Regional Committee will set up *District* Committees from members of *Regional Fraternity* and will appoint and replace them.

20 District Committees can, if necessary and only with the consent of the Regional Committee,

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set up a third tier of the organisation—*District Fraternity*—with a programme and regulations as near as possible to the general programme and regulations of the People's Fraternity. The programme and regulations of the District Fraternity will not come into force until they are discussed and passed by the general meeting of the Regional Fraternity and have been confirmed by the Regional Committee.

21 Jesuitical control and a system of entanglement by police methods and lies are totally excluded from all three tiers of the secret organisation, likewise from the District, Regional, and People's Fraternities. The strength of the whole Society, as well as the morality, loyalty, energy and dedication of each member, is based exclusively and totally on shared truth, sincerity and trust, and on the open fraternal control of all over each one.

HERE YOU HAVE the main outline of a plan for the Society such as I conceive it to be. Obviously this plan must be developed, supplemented, and sometimes altered according to circumstances and the character of the environment and should be defined much more clearly. But I am convinced that its essence must remain, if you wish to create a real collective power which is capable of serving the cause of people's liberation and not to initiate a new exploitation of the people.

The system of entanglement and of Jesuitical lies is totally excluded from this plan as being harmful, divisive, and corrupting principle and means. But parliamentary chatter and ambitious fussiness are also excluded. Strong discipline of all members in their relations with the Committees and all individual Committees in their relation with the C.C. are retained. The right of judgment and control over members belongs to Fraternities and not to Committees. New executive power is in the hands of the Committees. The right of judgment over Committees, including the Central, is the province of the People's Fraternity alone.

According to my plan the People's Fraternity will never consist of more than 50-70 members. At first it will probably consist of 10 men or even less and will grow slowly, accepting one man after another, submitting each one to the strictest and most thorough study and, if possible, accepting him only with the unanimous consent of all members of the People's Fraternity, but in any case not less than three-quarters of the Fraternity. It is impossible that in the course of two or three years 30 or 40 men cannot be found who would be capable of being People's Brothers.

Imagine the People's Fraternity for the whole of Russia consisting of 40, at most of 70 members. In addition there would be some hundreds of members belonging to the second tier of the organisation, Regional Brothers—and you have covered the whole of Russia with a mighty net. Your staff is set up. One has, as mentioned, assured within it—in addition to strict caution and the exclusion of all chatter, all ambitious and idle parliamentary debate—sincerity and mutual trust, real solidarity, as the only moralising unifying elements.

The whole Society constitutes one body and a firmly united whole, led by the C.C. and engaged in unceasing underground struggle against the government and against other societies either inimical to it or even those acting independently of it. Where there is war, there is politics, and there inescapably arises the necessity for violence, cunning, and deceit.

Societies whose aims are near to ours must be forced to merge with our Society or, at least, must be subordinated to it without their knowledge, while harmful people must be removed from them. Societies which are inimical or positively harmful must be dissolved, and finally the government must be destroyed. All this cannot be achieved only by propagating the truth; cunning, diplomacy, deceit are necessary. Jesuit methods or even entanglement can be used for this—entanglement is a necessary and marvellous means for demoralising and destroying the enemy, though *certainly not*[1] a useful means of obtaining and attracting a new friend.

Thus this simple law must be the basis of our activity: truth, honesty, mutual trust between all Brothers and towards any man who is capable of becoming and whom you would wish to become a Brother—lies, cunning, entanglement, and, if necessary, violence towards enemies. In this way you will imbue with morality, strengthen, and unite your own people and destroy the strength of others.

YOU, MY DEAR FRIEND—and this is a terrible mistake—have become fascinated by the system of Loyola and Machiavelli, the first of whom intended to enslave the whole of mankind, and the second to create a powerful state (whether monarchist or republican is of no importance, it would equally lead to the enslavement of the people). Having fallen in love with police and Jesuitical principles and methods, you intended to base on them your own organisation, your secret collective power: so to say, the heart and soul of your whole society. You therefore treat your friends as you treat your enemies, with cunning and lies, try to divide them, even to foment quarrels, so that they should not be able to unite against your tutelage. You look for strength not in their unity but in their disunity

[1] "On Bakunin's request Symen Serebrennikov added later on another copy the words 'certainly not' which completely change the sense of this sentence. These words do not occur in the original." Remark by Natalie Herzen.

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and do not trust them at all. You try to collect damning facts or letters (which frequently you have read without having the right to do so, and which are even stolen), and try to entangle them in every way, so that they should be your slaves. At the same time you do it so clumsily, so awkwardly and carelessly, so rashly and inconsiderately, that all your deceits, perfidies, and cunning are exposed very quickly. You have fallen so much in love with Jesuit methods that you have forgotten everything else. You have even forgotten the aim which led you to them, the passionate desire for the people's liberation. You have fallen so much in love with Jesuit methods that you are prepared to preach their necessity to anybody, even to Zhukovsky. You even wanted to write about them, to fill *Kolokol (The Bell)* with these theories—reminding one of Suvorov's saying "Thank goodness, he is not cunning whom everybody knows to be cunning." Briefly, you are playing with Jesuit methods as a child plays with a doll or Utin at Revolution.

NOW LET US HAVE A LOOK at what you have achieved and have had time to do in Geneva thanks to your Jesuit system. You were given the Bakhmetev fund. This is the only real result which you have achieved. But Ogarev gave it to you and I warmly advised that you should be given it, not because you played the Jesuit with us, but because we felt and recognised in you, in addition to your far-from-clever Jesuitism, a man who is deeply, warmly, and earnestly devoted to the Russian cause. But you know—this is a bitter confession for me—I almost repent that I advised Ogarev to give you the fund. Not because I could think that you might use them dishonestly or for your own advantage—saints preserve me from such an ignoble and simply inept thought! I am prepared to answer with my life that you will never use one penny more than necessary for yourself. No, I begin to repent because, observing your actions, I have stopped believing in your political wisdom, in the earnestness and the reality of your Committee and your whole Society. The sum is not large, but it is the only one and it will disappear in vain, uselessly, and wantonly in mad and impossible activities.

You could have done a lot of useful things in Geneva with this modest sum in your hands and with the help of a few people who met you with complete sincerity and expressed their readiness to serve the common cause without demands or claims, without vanity or ambition. You could have set up a serious organ with an avowed social-revolutionary programme and attached to it a foreign bureau for the management of Russian activities outside Russia and in a certain, though not absolute but positive [word missing] to it. Your Committee, *i.e.* you, invited me to Geneva for this purpose for the first time. What did I find in Geneva? First of all, a mangled programme for *Kolokol* on which the Committee and you made simply absurd and impossible demands. Do you know, I simply cannot forgive my weakness in yielding to you on this question—I have to answer for this poor *Kolokol* and for solidarity with you to all my international friends, thanks on the one hand to Utin and on the other to Zhukovsky, the first of whom slanders me and you maliciously, and the second good-humouredly.

By the way, about Zhukovsky. You demonstrated with regard to him your complete ignorance and your incomprehension of people, your inability to attract them in a straightforward, honest, firm way to your cause. Knowing him intimately, I have described his character to you in detail, his abilities and ineptitudes, so that it should not have been difficult for you to establish serious relations with him. I described him to you as a very kind and able man, far from stupid, although without any intellectual initiative, accepting all ideas at second hand and capable of popularising them or chattering about them fairly eloquently, not so much on paper as in conversation. As a man of artistic sensibility fairly firmly committed to a certain orientation, but without much character, in the sense that he does not like danger, he bows before strong contradiction and easily succumbs to all sorts of influences. In a word, he is a man very capable of being a conductor of propaganda, but completely incapable of being a member of a secret society. You ought to have believed me, but did not do so; and instead of attracting Zhukovsky to our cause, alienated him from you and from me. You tried to enlist and ensnare him, and having ensnared him, to make him your slave. To do this you started to scold and ridicule me; but Zhukovsky has an instinct for honesty which rebelled. He told me everything that you told him about me, told it with indignation and scorn and had I been a vainer and weaker man this would have been enough for me to break my connection with you. You will remember that I contented myself with faithfully repeating to you Zhukovsky's words without comment. You did not reply, and I did not think it necessary to continue this discussion. Then you started to explain to Zhukovsky your favourite state-communist and police-Jesuit theories, and this finally estranged him from you. Finally, there was this unfortunate gossip by Henry, and Zhukovsky became your bitter and irreconcilable foe, not only your foe but almost mine as well.

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And he might have been useful in spite of all his weaknesses.

I MUST ALSO CONFESS, dear friend, that your system of blackmailing, entangling and scaring Tata [Natalie Herzen][2] was extremely repugnant to me and I told you about this several times. The result was that you instilled in her a deep suspicion towards all of us and a conviction that you and I intended to exploit [her] financial resources and to exploit them, of course, for ourselves and not for the cause. Tata is a truly honest and truthful person incapable, it seems to me, of giving herself completely to anyone or anything, therefore a dilettante if not by nature then by perception, an intellectual and moral dilettante, whose word, however, one can trust and who is capable of being, if not our friend, at least a true well-wisher. She should have been treated in a straightforward and honest manner, without resorting to the tricks which you think are your strength, but which in fact show your weakness. While I considered it possible and useful to speak to her directly and openly to try to influence her free convictions, I did so. I did not wish to go any further with you in this matter as I found it repugnant. As soon as I heard from you that Natalia Alekseevna had slandered me, maintaining that I had designs on Tata's pocket and saw that Tata herself was doubtful, not knowing whether this was true, I withdrew from her decisively.

By the way, you insisted several times that you heard from Tata herself that Natalia Alekseevna and Tchorzewski claim everywhere, shout and write to everybody, that I want to exploit Tata's financial resources. Natalia Alekseevna and Tchorzewski, on the contrary, maintain that they have never written and said it, and Tata herself confirmed this. During your last visit to Geneva you told me that you heard from Serebrennikov (Symen) that Zhukovsky had told him that I exploit Tata. I asked Serebrennikov and found out that Zhukovsky said that not about me, but about you. You also told me that Zhukovsky's wife tried to persuade you to join Utin, assuring you that an alliance with me was useless, impossible, and harmful. She maintains the contrary: she did not speak about me to you; she did not invite you to join Utin with whom she herself had more or less broken, and that you, not she, proposed that you find money to achieve an alliance and she was waiting to receive these funds from you.

You see how many unnecessary, stupid lies there are, and how easily they are revealed. Yes, I must confess that my first visit to Geneva had already disappointed me and undermined my faith in the possibility of a firm alliance and common action with you. In addition, not a sensible word was said between us about the business for which I was summoned and solely for which I came to Geneva. Several times I started a discussion about the foreign bureau; you avoided it, awaiting some sort of final answer from the Committee, which never arrived. Finally, I left, having sent through you a letter to the Committee in which I demanded a clear definition and explanation of the business for which I was summoned, firmly intending not to return to Geneva unless I had received a satisfactory reply.

In May you again started asking me to come to Geneva. I refused several times; finally I came. The last trip confirmed all doubts and completely shook my faith in the honesty and truthfulness of your word. Your conversations with Lopatin in my presence on the evening of my arrival: his direct and sharp accusations, which he made to your face with a conviction which did not permit any doubt as to the veracity of his words—words which showed your statements to be lies. His direct contradiction of all details in the story written by you about your escape. His direct accusations against your dearest friends, accusations of ignoble, even stupid treachery before the commission of inquiry, accusations which were not unsupported but based on their written evidence which (according to him and confirmed by you later) he had a chance to read. In particular, the contempt expressed by him about the completely unnecessary denunciation by Pryzhov, of whom you spoke as being one of your best and firmest friends. Finally, his direct and definite denial of the existence of your Committee which was expressed in the following words:

> "Nechayev can tell the story to you who live outside Russia. However, he will not repeat all this in my presence, knowing full well that I am familiar with all the groups, all the people and all attitudes and facts in Russia. You see that he confirms by his silence the truth of all I say both about his escape, the circumstances of which, as he is aware, are only too well known to me, down to the smallest detail, and I know also about his friends and imaginary Committee."

And in fact you remained silent and did not attempt to defend yourself, or any of your friends, or even the reality of the existence of your Committee.

He triumphed; you retreated before him. I cannot express to you, my dear friend, how hurt I was both for your sake and for mine. I could not doubt the truth of Lopatin's words any longer. It followed that you systematically lied to us, that your whole enterprise was riddled with rotten lies and was founded on sand. It meant that your Committee consisted of you accounting for at

[2] See Natalie Herzen, "A Revolutionary Diary", ENCOUNTER, May 1970.

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least three-quarters of it, with a following of two, three, or four people who are subordinate to you, or at least under your predominant influence. It meant that the cause to which you had entirely dedicated your life had burst, dissipated in a puff of smoke, as a result of false and stupid orientation, as a result of your Jesuitical system which had corrupted you and, even more, your friends. I loved you deeply and still love you, Nechayev. I firmly, too firmly, believed in you and to see you in such a position, so humiliated in front of the chatterer Lopatin, was inexpressibly bitter to me.

I WAS ALSO HURT on my own account. Carried away by my faith in you, I gave you my name and publicly espoused your cause. I tried as much as I could to strengthen Ogarev's sympathy towards you and his faith in your cause. I continually advised him to give up to you all the money. I attracted Ozerov to you and spared no efforts in order to persuade Tata to join us, *i.e.* you, and to devote herself wholly to your cause. Finally, against my better judgment, I persuaded Ogarev to agree to publish *Kolokol* according to the wild and impossible programme invented by you. Briefly, having complete faith in you, while you systematically duped me, I turned out to be a complete fool. This is painful and shameful for a man of my experience and my age. Worse than this, I spoilt my situation with regard to the Russian and the International causes.

When Lopatin left, I asked you: Is it possible that he told the truth, that everything you told me was a lie? You evaded an answer. It was late and I left. All the conversations and discussions with Lopatin the following day finally convinced me that Lopatin told the truth. You were silent. I awaited the result of your last talk with Lopatin; you did not tell me about it, but I found it out from Lopatin's letter which Ozerov will read to you.

What I found out was enough to induce me to take measures against further exploitation of myself and my friends by you. Accordingly I wrote you an ultimatum which I hastily read to you at the Turks[3] and which you appeared to accept.

Since then I have not seen you.

The day before yesterday I finally received a letter from Lopatin from which I gathered two rather sad facts: firstly, you (I do not wish to use any adjectives) you lied when you reported to me your talk with Lopatin. Everything you told me about his alleged words was a complete lie. He did not tell you that I gave him letters from Lyubavin: "The old man could not hold out, he is in our hands now and cannot do anything against us, and we can now all . . .", to which you were supposed to have replied: "If Bakunin was so weak as to give you Lyubavin's letters, we have other letters, etc." You lied, you slandered Lopatin, and you deliberately duped me. Lopatin is surprised that I believed you, and in a polite form deduces from this fact a conclusion less than flattering to my mental capacities. He is right. In this case I showed myself a complete fool. He would not have judged me quite so severely had he known how deeply, how passionately, how tenderly I loved you and believed in you! You were able, and found it useful, to kill this belief in me—so much the worse for you. How could I think that a man who was intelligent and devoted to the cause, as you still remain in my eyes in spite of all that has happened—how could I imagine that you would tell such barefaced and stupid lies to me of whose devotion you could have no doubts? Why did you not realise that your impudent lies would be discovered and that I would demand, would have to demand, an explanation from Lopatin, the more so because my ultimatum contained a clearly expressed demand that the Lyubavin affair must be completely clarified? *Another fact:* Lyubavin did not get my reply to his rude letter, therefore he did not receive my receipt which I enclosed with this reply. When I showed you my reply and receipt, you asked me to wait and not send them. I did not agree, and you offered to post them but did not do so.

THIS IS ENOUGH, NECHAYEV—our old relationship and our mutual obligations are at an end. You yourself have destroyed them. If you thought and still think that you have bound me, entangled me morally and materially, you are completely mistaken. Nothing on earth can bind me against my conscience, against my honour, against my will, against my revolutionary convictions and duty.

It is true that thanks to you my financial position is now very difficult. I have no means of existence, and my only source of income, translating Marx and the hope of other literary work connected with it, has now dried up. I am aground and do not know how I shall manage to get off, but that is the least of my troubles.

It is true that I have compromised friends and was compromised in front of them. It is true that I am being slandered in connection with the funds, in connection with Tata, and finally in connection with all the recent events in Russia.

But all this will not deter me. In case of dire necessity I am prepared for a public admission and confession of my stupidity, of which of course I shall be very much ashamed, but which will

[3] A villa where Bakunin and Nechayev met, previously inhabited by a company of Turks.

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reflect even more upon you—but I shall not remain your unwilling ally.

Thus I give notice to you that all my horrid relationships with you and with your cause are at an end. *But in breaking them off I offer you new relations on a different basis.*

Lopatin, who does not know you as well as I do, would have been surprised at my suggestion after all that has happened between us. You will not be surprised, nor will my close friends.

THERE IS NO DOUBT that you have perpetrated many stupidities and many dirty tricks, positively harmful and destructive to the cause. But it is also clear to me that all your inept actions and terrible blunders were not caused by your self-interest, greed, vanity, or ambition, but only by your misunderstanding of the situation. You are a passionately dedicated man; there are few like you. This is your strength, your valour and your justification. You and your Committee, if the latter really exists, are full of energy and are prepared to execute without fuss anything you consider useful for the cause—this is valuable. But neither your Committee nor you possess any common sense—this is now obvious. You have taken to the Jesuit system like children, and seeing in it your whole strength, success, and salvation have forgotten the very essence and aim of the Society: liberation of the people not only from the government but from you, from yourselves. Having adopted this system you have carried it to a monstrously stupid extreme, have corrupted yourselves by it and have disgraced the Society throughout the world by your only too obvious guile and incredible stupidities—like your stern letters to Lyubavin and to Natalia Alekseevna which were matched by your polite patience towards Utin; like your attempts to ingratiate yourself with him while he slandered all of us loudly and impudently; like your stupid communist programme and a whole series of shameless deceits. All this proves an absence of common sense, an ignorance of people, relationships, and things. It follows that one cannot rely on your common sense, at least at present, in spite of the fact that you are an extremely intelligent man, capable of further development. This, however, gives hope for the future; at present you are as clumsy and inept as a boy.

HAVING FINALLY CONVINCED myself of this, my position is now as follows:

I do not believe your words, your unsupported assurances and promises which are not confirmed by facts, knowing that you would not hesitate to lie if this seemed to you to be useful to the cause. Nor do I believe in the justice or wisdom of what you imagine to be useful, because you and your Committee have given me too many proofs of your positive lack of sense. But denying your veracity and your wisdom, I do not deny your energy and your undoubted devotion to the cause, and believe that there are few people in Russia equal to you in either. This, I repeat again, was the chief, indeed the only basis of my love for you and my faith in you and I am convinced it still remains a guarantee that you alone of all the Russians I know are capable of serving the revolutionary cause in Russia and destined to do so but only if you want and are able to alter the whole system of your activities in Russia and abroad. However, if you do not wish to change it, you will inevitably become a man highly harmful to the cause as a result of those very qualities which are your strength.

As a consequence of these considerations and in spite of all that has happened between us, I would wish not only to remain allied with you, but to make this union even closer and firmer, on condition that you will change the system entirely and will make mutual trust, sincerity and truth the foundation of our future relations. Otherwise the break between us is inevitable.

Now here are my personal and general conditions. I will enumerate the personal ones first:

1 You must shield and clear me entirely in the Lyubavin affair by writing a collective letter to Ogarev, Tata, Ozerov and S. Serebrennikov in which you will announce, as is indeed the truth, that I did not know anything about the letter of the Committee and that it has been written without my knowledge and consent.

2 That you have read my reply to Lyubavin with the enclosed receipt for 300 rubles and having undertaken to send it, have either posted it or not.

3 That I have never directly or indirectly interfered in the disposal of the Bakhmetev fund. That you have received the whole of the monies at various times: first from the hands of Herzen[4] and Ogarev and the remaining, larger part from the hands of Ogarev who, after the death of Herzen was the only one who had the right to dispose of it, and that you received this fund in the name of the Committee whose manager you were.

4 If you have not yet given Ogarev the receipt for this fund, then you must do so.

5 You have to return as soon as possible the note from Danielson through us and through Lopatin. If you have not got it (though I am sure you have) you must in the same letter undertake to deliver it in the shortest possible time.

6 You will abandon purposeless or, worse, positively harmful attempts for a *rapprochement* with Utin, who most vilely slanders both of us and all that is ours in Russia, and on the contrary will undertake, having chosen the right time and occasion in order not to harm the cause, to conduct open war against him.

These are my personal conditions; a refusal of one of them, in particular of the first five and the

[4] "Quite wrong" [Natalie Herzen's comment].

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first half of the sixth (*i.e.* breaking off all ties with Utin), will be sufficient reason for me to break all relations with you. All this has to be done by you generously, frankly, honestly without any misunderstandings, reservations, hints and equivocations. It is time we put our cards on the table.

HERE ARE the general conditions:

1 Without naming the names, which we do not need, you will show us the actual state of your organisation and cause in Russia, of your hopes, your propaganda, your movements, without exaggeration and deceit.

2 You will eradicate from your organisation any use of police and Jesuitical systems, confining their application to the government and inimical parties and only when it is really necessary in practice and in accordance with common sense.

3 You will drop the absurd idea that revolution can be made outside the people and without its participation, and will adopt as a basis of your organisation the spontaneous people's revolution in which the people will be the army and the organisation only its staff.

4 You will adopt as a basis of the organisation the social-revolutionary programme expounded in the first number of *The People's Cause* (*Narodnoe Delo*), the plan of organisation and revolutionary propaganda expounded by me in my letter, with such additions and alterations as we shall together find necessary at a general meeting.

5 All that has been agreed in our common discussion and unanimous decisions will be proposed by you to all your friends in Russia and abroad. Should they reject our decisions, you will have to decide for yourself whether you wish to follow them or us, to break your ties with them or with us.

6 If they accept the programme, organisational plan, the rules of the Society, the plan for propaganda and for revolutionary action worked out by us, you will, in your own and their name, give us your hand and your word of honour that from now on this programme, this plan of organisation, propaganda and action, will be absolute law and the indispensable basis of the whole Society in Russia.

7 We shall believe you and will make a new firm bond with you—Ogarev, Ozerov, S. Serebrennikov and I, possibly Tata, if she should so wish and if you and all the others agree. We shall in truth be People's Brothers who live and act abroad. Therefore, without ever showing any undue curiosity, we shall have the right to know and will indeed know actively and in the necessary detail the situation of conspiratorial affairs and immediate aims in Russia.

8 Then we, all the above-mentioned, will set up a bureau abroad to deal with all Russian affairs abroad, without exception, taking into consideration the lines of Russian policy, but choosing freely methods, people and means.

9 In addition, *Kolokol* will be published with a clear revolutionary, socialist programme, if this is necessary and if money for it is available.

HERE ARE MY CONDITIONS, Nechayev. If you have been inspired by good sense and sober judgment and if love of the cause is really stronger in you than all other considerations, you will accept them.

And if you do not accept, my decision is inflexible. I shall have to break all ties with you. I will act independently, taking nothing into consideration except my own conscience, understanding, and duty.

M. Bakunin

9th June 1870, Locarno.

HERE, MY FRIENDS,* *is at last the end of my enormous letter to the Baron. Please read it all attentively. You will find in it many longueurs and repetitions, but I hope that you will agree with its contents and, most important, with its conclusion. If you do agree, will you signify it at the end of the letter by your signature —there is enough space left for all remarks— and try to convey it as soon as possible and, if possible, in person and by hand through Ozerov to the Baron. I have not re-read it and wrote without reflection straight from my head and heart.*

The letter is so long, so unbearably long, that I am afraid to ask Tata or friend Sasha, and if not them then Serebrennikov, to copy it from the beginning and keep his copy—nevertheless this is essential for me and for us all.

I hope you will be pleased with my reply to Lopatin which I shall send you tomorrow together with Lopatin's letter (which must be read by Serebrennikov and kept in your hands as neutrals and witnesses. It must also be read to the Baron but not given to him).

Our friend, the Baron, has completely drowned himself in lies and this must be ended. It was with good reason that for several years, from 1863 to 1867, I kept myself apart from Russians and Russian affairs. As soon as I touched them I got into a muck heap: but now I want to keep up with them. It is necessary to unravel the whole thing patiently and put it on a sound basis. If you want to help me, I hope that together we will succeed.

The main thing for the moment is to save our erring and confused friend. In spite of all he remains a valuable man, and there are few valuable men in the world.

Therefore . . . let us save him together . . . .

* M. A. Bakunin to Ogarev, Ozerov, Serebrennikov and Tata.

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LETTERS

John Trevelyan Replies

I SUPPOSE I should regard it as a compliment that *R* [ENCOUNTER, April] has chosen some comments of mine in *The Evening News* for an exercise of his intellectual logic. The subject of my article was violence in screen entertainment, and I wrote it in order to support my successor, Stephen Murphy, the film censor, in his decision to let the adult public see Stanley Kubrick's brilliant film *A Clockwork Orange*; a decision that I believed to be wholly justified.

R appears to be unconvinced by my argument, and in this he is in company with the *Sunday Mirror*, a newspaper which has undertaken to find out the truth about the effect of screen violence on viewers and to tell the Home Secretary what he should do about it. There is, however, one basic difference. In its condemnation of "the guilty men" the *Sunday Mirror* makes full use of the violence that it is claiming to condemn in words reminiscent of Hitler at his worst, whereas *R* in cultured English prose merely expresses doubts about my claim that there is need for "evidence" to justify statements claiming that the fantasy violence of the screen produces or stimulates the violence of reality.

Nevertheless *R* falls into the same trap as the *Sunday Mirror* by implying that, regardless of the failure of research to produce "evidence", "we do not require absolute proof" before indulging in condemnation. We can fall back on "Revelation", "Faith", "Deductive Reason" or "Induction." These processes have in the past been used to decide that the Earth was flat, and that the Universe was created solely for the benefit of human beings on this planet.

On one point, however, I am in agreement with him. My fear for some time has been that continuous programmes of fantasy violence on television and in cinemas may render people insensible to the horrors of violence, and cause them either to ignore it or to accept it as an unchangeable characteristic of human personality. If this is so surely one can only make people think about the horror of violence by shocking them out of their insensibility. This, as I saw it, was what Kubrick was doing in his film.

In my comments I was trying to make the point that it was the violence "put into films for the enjoyment of the viewer and for commercial profit" that could be condemned for contributing to the apathy. Whereas the violence put into a film for a valid purpose, as in *A Clockwork Orange*, might well have the opposite effect. It had this effect on me, but obviously not on *R*. He felt that he was being "brutally and savagely assaulted himself" which was surely what Kubrick intended. He also says that the film "titillates the sadistic appetites of its audience." Was he then both raped and titillated at the same time? If so, it would be interesting to know which was the stronger sensation.

In the March ENCOUNTER John Weightman defends the violence in *Straw Dogs*, a film that I have not seen but which was strongly condemned by some leading critics. He found its extremes of violence "enjoyable" and tells us that "the appeal of this film is really escapism through violence." Perhaps next time *R* will contend with his own editorial colleague since he would be a much more worthy opponent.

JOHN TREVELYAN

London

I HOPE that, in his work as censor, Mr Trevelyan looked at films with rather more care and attention than he has given to reading my column.

Of course I did not say that no evidence was required to justify us in condemning the representation of violence on the screen. What I said was that, despite Mr Trevelyan's assertion to the contrary, evidence was available which tended to justify us in doing so, and that it was reasonable to take this into account even if it did not amount to "absolute proof" (which, after all, is rarely available for any of our moral or aesthetic judgments).

Nor of course did I imply that Revelation, Faith, Deductive Reason, or Induction absolve us from any need of evidence; what I said was that in the past they have each successively been regarded as in themselves sufficient sources of evidence. I find it difficult to see how anyone could possibly disagree with this. The question is, what do we mean by evidence?

So perhaps Mr Trevelyan is really arguing with someone else, not me (the *Sunday Mirror*, perhaps?). Nor does he seem to have grasped the main point of my argument, which was the inconsistency of taking it for granted, without any evidence at all, that films can have good effects, while refusing to believe, without "absolute proof", that they can have bad ones.

And what on earth gives Mr Trevelyan his rather touching assurance that *A Clockwork Orange* was made without thought of commercial profit? I should myself be surprised if this was really so but Mr Trevelyan, with his much greater knowledge of the film industry, may know better.

Rape or titillation? I am not much of an expert on either, but, if Mr Trevelyan really wants to know, I should regard the first as the more violent experience. But I didn't suffer either during *A Clockwork Orange*; what I endured was assault and battery, which is something different again.

R

London

The Fear of Crime

ANYONE WHO HAS WATCHED Sidney Hook dispose of a critic in a correspondence column will be cautious about challenging him. Nevertheless, although I agree with nearly all that he has to say about the rights of potential victims in your April issue, I must rise to the defence of sociologists. I am afraid that Professor Hook is accurately quoting some sociologist in good standing in the reference to the notion that "the widespread popular concern about crime is almost as serious a problem as the crime problem itself." No doubt he draws a correct inference about the bizarre and irresponsible judgment contained in that statement. Unfortunately, there are sociologists capable of

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making such essentially meaningless comparisons.

But the fear of crime is a destructive phenomenon. Its consequences are terrible, no matter how reasonable and natural the fear itself may be. The buying of guns, the mistrust of strangers, the avoidance of the streets by day or night, and the loss of community are real and natural responses to the knowledge that there is crime in the city and a great deal of it. There is much reason to believe that crime feeds on this pervading fear. It is easier to mug on an empty street or to break into a house. Fearful people are all too often drawn to the commission of the crimes they fear. The child who takes a gun or knife to school for self-protection may eventually use his weapon for intimidation or assault.

Those who write about the fear of crime as though it were hysteria do not help us to understand it. But to refer to it as only "natural and reasonable" may lead us to ignore its consequences. Until crime is radically reduced, a distant eventuality, the fear of crime will cripple us and the communities in which we live. In that sense, "the widespread popular concern about crime" is indeed an extremely serious problem. We would do well to apply our ingenuity to making its impact less grievous.

JOHN P. CONRAD

Washington, D.C.

MR CONRAD'S OBSERVATIONS are reasonable and I do not disagree with them. I stressed the propriety of "intelligent fear" of crime. This certainly does not find appropriate expression in some of the measures he justifiably condemns. I would add of course that in addition to reorienting our thinking about the rights of criminals and the rights of the victims of crime, we must also embark on multiple programmes of social and educational reform that promise to eliminate some of the causes of crime. Where crime is rife, there will always be fear of crime. The point is to channel it in intelligent ways.

SIDNEY HOOK

New York University

"The Week" That Was

Claud Cockburn Replies

PROBABLY one should congratulate Mr D. C. Watt [ENCOUNTER, May] on facing the suffocating ennui of prowling and sniffing his way through the dusty files of *The Week* looking for errors of fact and judgment.

The resulting brain-fag must, I suppose, account for the multiplicity of his own errors, otherwise difficult to explain or excuse in one purporting to have conducted serious historical research.

One could have expected that he might get the simplest, basic facts about his subject right. It is hard to read all the way through an article in which the author so crudely displays ignorance of such facts at the outset. He refers to "the 40,000 odd copies Cockburn mailed out every week." If one is discussing a publication at all, it is important not to falsify its circulation figures. The highest figure ever reached by *The Week* was 12,000. The average was about 7,000. I can only imagine that Mr Watt is one of those who finds it impossible to conceive how a paper with so small a circulation could have had the influence he attributes to *The Week*. It is a common mistake of people with limited, or purely commercial, vision to equate circulation with influence.

He has an obscurely written passage in which he finds significance—finds indeed an explanation of my political behaviour—in my "being Irish." I am not Irish. Nor were my ancestors. When I started *The Week* I had never been to Ireland.

He says I was not an "openly avowed" Communist. Short of advertising that affiliation in the matrimonial columns of *The Times*, I could hardly have been less secretive about it. It was published in dozens of newspapers and many languages. It was known to most politically, diplomatically and journalistically informed people in London. Perhaps Mr Watt does not meet informed people.

HE COMPLAINS THAT there are gaps in the library files of *The Week*. If he knew a little more about what he is trying expertly to write about, he would know (*1*) That during most of its lifetime *The Week* had a secretarial staff of one. Often the mailing had to be handled haphazard. Those libraries which expected to get it free had low priority in the scramble. (*2*) Part of the total mailed weekly was irregularly but frequently seized by the police. (*3*) When the paper was suppressed, the police took away the whole file. Mr Watt can, I believe, consult it at Scotland Yard.

His notion of the role of American and other foreign correspondents connected, most informally, with *The Week* is grotesque but revealing. It would be insulting to them were it not so evidently the product of simple ignorance. I am glad to see that he excepts G. E. R. Gedye from his clumsy strictures. He evidently does not know—how would such a person as Watt know?—that Gedye was one of the first dozen subscribers to *The Week* and thereafter was for many years among its most regular and valued informants: characteristically, when personal meetings were impossible, he repeatedly risked his job by sending his urgent reports through the mail.

To suppose that men like Edgar Mowrer, John Gunther, Pertinax, Norman Ebbutt, or Sir Willmott Lewis did not "hob-nob" with "the great"—what gaping *snobisme* inspired that ghastly phrase?—is to misunderstand the atmosphere of a whole period.

THIS LEADS HIM to proclaim his cosy belief that members of "the Establishment" had "at least a more accurate understanding of the processes and influences which produced official policy than had the international press corps." Here Mr Watt, in that spirit of reverence for the Establishment which permeates

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his article, shows himself *plus royaliste que le Roi*. The people at the Foreign Office, Quai d'Orsay and Wilhelmstrasse never made so large a claim.

Watt is unaware of the fact, which was of real importance and significance in the Thirties, that a great part of the information reaching the correspondents came from highly placed officials of the Establishment who, for political, often patriotic reasons, regarded the policy of their Governments as disastrous, and desired that it be exposed.

Only a couple of months ago, at a small party, a person, operating roughly at the Watt level, remarked that naturally *The Week* had no genuine information about British foreign policy. Another of those present, who retired from an Ambassadorship a few years ago, said he could hardly agree since he himself had been a member of the confidential committee set up by the Foreign Office to investigate where *The Week*'s steady supply of inside information from the Foreign Office was coming from. (The committee never found it: they did not look quite high enough in the echelons. I am sorry that even at this date I cannot give the relevant names to Mr Watt for use in his forthcoming book, since both those principally concerned still occupy fairly conspicuous positions in diplomacy and the City.)

Mr Watt's non-understanding of the period makes it difficult to ponder seriously his criticisms of particular reports in *The Week*. I find his factual information and his assessments alike suspect.

I WOULD SUGGEST, however, that if he were to study the files of *The Times* with the same critical glare he directs to those of *The Week* he would find in the same period more factual errors, more distorted interpretations than he discovered in *The Week*. I always said at the time that we did not pretend to be 100 per cent accurate: we did claim to be more accurate than *The Times*.

All this would hardly be worth bothering about were it not that I have noticed in recent years that whenever *The Week* is currently criticised, the criticism is part of some attempt to re-write the history of the Thirties in a sense favourable to Neville Chamberlain, "The Cliveden Set", and the then existing Establishment in general.

CLAUD COCKBURN

Brook Lodge, Youghal,
Co. Cork, Ireland

MR COCKBURN scatters insults with all the abandon of one of Al Capone's trigger men spraying a Chicago street with bullets in the hope that one will hit its target. I should have known he was a Scot. "Flyting", verbal contestation with the *argumentum ad hominem* as a valued weapon, is a Scottish sport going back at least to the late Middle Ages. Yet why is he so aggrieved when I overdo things in his favour? What would he have said if I had dropped a "0" off my figure for *The Week*'s circulation? He calls me a snob—apparently because I allegedly revere the Establishment but did not know the right "top people" in London when *The Week* was being published. How could I? I was only eighteen when *The Week* ceased publication and I was, dare I confess it to Mr Cockburn, born and bred in the provinces. After which confession Mr Cockburn will no doubt expect me to abandon all attempts to write anything about the 1930s which does not accept *The Week* as gospel.

I remain unrepentant in my belief that those who were involved in the processes of making decisions on foreign policy in their own country, and knew how they were reached in other countries, would have regarded *The Week*'s universal application of the conspiratorial theory of history with a certain scepticism. As for the provincial readers of *The Week*, like my parents, or its American readership, does Mr Cockburn maintain that they knew his Party affiliations? Or is it that not being his kind of "top people" (see his list on pp. 139-40 of *I, Claud*) they did not matter? And if I have any complaints about the difficulty of getting hold of a file of *The Week*, they were not directed at the MI5-infested figure of Mr Cockburn and I cannot see why he should feel they were.

As to *The Week*'s sources of information, the great test is not *who* they were but whether *what they said was accurate*. Or does Mr Cockburn feel that all members of "the Establishment" always told the truth to him and his informants, and never succeeded in "gulling" him. Perhaps the obverse of "it must be true—the Quai d'Orsay has denied it" was "it must be true—the Quai d'Orsay has leaked it to one of Mr Cockburn's distinguished friends."

But all of this is a smokescreen—as are Mr Cockburn's distinguished, but anonymous ex-Foreign Office informants. Perhaps he has their signed depositions in a safe deposit in Switzerland. The ultimate test of *The Week* is—was it accurate? I used to accept Mr Cockburn's assurances on this point. Then it occurred to me to check—the results were presented to ENCOUNTER's readership. Mr Cockburn spends four-fifths of his letter exhibiting his contempt for me because he cannot dispute my conclusion—that *The Week* is essential to understanding the psychology of the 1930s, but useless as a guide to events. What is interesting is to compare it with other similar private news letters published at the time. The best, by far, and the only one to my knowledge actually investigated by MI5 for a possible breach of the Official Secrets Act, was the *Whitehall Letter* whose editor was the late Captain Victor Gordon-Lennox, then diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. His information came very largely from Sir Robert Vansittart and Rex Leeper.

Mr Cockburn ends, characteristically, with a smear. He once wrote:

> "I have sometimes wondered since whether I really believed more than about 25% of the tens of thousands of words I wrote at that time . . . what matters is not whether the weapon is good, but whether the cause is."

Historians, Mr Cockburn, are not concerned with whitewash. They are concerned with the distinction between myths spread by the interested parties, and genuine evidence. *The Week*, like Mr Cockburn himself, is part of the history of the 1930s. That history is full of myths. I set out to identify one of them, to demythologise a small part of recent history. I submit that he has written nothing to defeat my purpose.

DONALD C. WATT

London School of Economics

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London

THE REAL THING: Forgeries by Thomas Wise, the eminent bibliographer who specialised in forging rare and even non-existent Victorian pamphlets, are now fetching quite high prices. It is only a question of time, perhaps, before it becomes worthwhile for some forger to forge copies of Wise's own forgeries.

This odd phenomenon has already occurred in the case of forgeries by van Meegeren, the famous Dutch forger who specialised in paintings by Vermeer.

Forgeries of van Meegeren's forgeries and forgeries of paintings which he did not forge but which can be falsely attributed to him have already appeared. If the market holds there may soon be forgeries of forgeries of forgeries, an endless vista of fraud.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

MEANING OF MEANING: *It is biting some people badly—referendum fever. Three weeks ago the Labour Shadow Cabinet declared against a referendum on the Common Market.*

Last week, with Mr Wilson leading, it stood on its head [Woodrow Wyatt writes].

Doubtless those who want a referendum in which the public would be asked yes or no to the Common Market were elated by last Sunday's front page of the "Sunday Express". It displayed answers to a survey conducted by the National Opinion Polls for the Anti-Common Market Information Bureau.

One question pointed out that Norway, Denmark and Ireland will hold a referendum before joining. "Do you think the British should do the same?" the question went on.

Seventy-eight per cent said yes. However, another question in the same survey was not printed.

It was: "You may have heard the word referendum. Can you tell me what this word means to you?"

Only 27 per cent gave the correct meaning.

DAILY MIRROR

London

DIRTY OLD BOOKS: *Dirty old men are incapable of being corrupted any further, and as long as they make up the majority of regular customers a bookseller does not break the law in selling dirty books to them, two High Court judges decided yesterday.*

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court dismissed with costs a police appeal against a decision by Southampton magistrates to acquit a husband and wife of selling dirty books.

Police kept observation on the type of people visiting the shop most frequently. "In the main they were middle-aged and upwards—what are commonly known as dirty old men."

The 20 books for which Mr and Mrs Whyte were prosecuted comprised written descriptions or pictorial representations of sexual activity ranging from normal to deviant behaviour. There were also some instances of sadistic and violent behaviour.

Considered in the light of a readership of "dirty old men" they took the view that the books would not tend to deprave or corrupt, and dismissed the summonses.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Manchester

BENEFITS: More twaddle [Sir Leonard Behrens writes] is talked about "colonialism" than about most other matters, and it is therefore with much pleasure that I recall a comment made some years ago at a meeting of the World Federation of United Nations Associations by a delegate from one of our ex-colonies.

He said: "Ethiopia and Liberia are the only countries in Africa which have not benefited by suffering under colonialism."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

New York

CHE GUEVARA LEAVIS: *Merle Miller says that "Wolfe did not invent the term 'radical chic,' but in using it to describe the gathering [the Leonard Bernstein party for the Black Panthers], he made it part of the vocabulary. . . ." As one who has followed the phenomenon closely from the beginning, I should point out [Tom Wolfe writes] that, in fact, Tom Wolfe* did *invent the term "radical chic."*

Incidentally, your article failed to mention one obvious reason why people at "The New York Review of Books" became so furious over the book, "Radical Chic & Mau-mauing the Flak Catchers." Namely, it called "The Review" "the chief theoretical organ of Radical Chic." It described "The Review's" attempts to pose simultaneously as Stage Englishman of the Literary World and as Urban Guerilla, which was laughable but "really no contradiction at all, of course. It was merely the essential double-track mentality of Radical Chic—nostalgie de la boue *and high protocol—in its literary form." One or two people at "The New York Review of Books" apparently took this as a laying bare of their most profound ambition (i.e., to be F. R. Leavis decorated with the Che Guevara Cruz de la Revolución) and, to borrow the phrase of an American humorist, "screamed like weenies over a wood fire."*

NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

Chicago

WAY OF LIFE: Previous winners of the "Black Man of the Month Award" have been Chicago Bears running back Gale Sayers and Comedian Dick Gregory. The award, presented by Holy Angels' parish in a black area of Chicago's South Side, honours outstanding contributions to the race. The current Black Man of the Month: George O'Hare, a Sears, Roebuck executive who was awarded the plaque for his work with the late Martin Luther King Jr. in Chicago and his efforts to improve education and other conditions in the city's ghettos. The fact that O'Hare is white did not trouble the parish. Said Pastor George Clements: "Blackness is a way of life, not merely a skin color."

TIME

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Alisdair Aird
THE AUTOMOTIVE NIGHTMARE
"... a searing indictment of the car and all its works ... Alisdair Aird attacks the manufacturers for negligence, the insurance industry for trickery, the economists for shortsightedness, the planners for ignorance, and the garage trade for incompetence"
Ian Breach/Guardian
£3.50/illustrated

Bryan Cooper
ALASKA—
THE LAST FRONTIER
Alaska – larger in area than Britain, France, Germany and Italy combined – is America's last frontier. Harsh, unimaginably cold, but savagely beautiful, it has become a major battleground in the conflict over conservation since the oil industry has been prevented from exploiting its discoveries to protect wildlife and the environment
£3.90/illustrated

John Bowers
THE COLONY
"... very soon people will start talking about this as an important book, how it describes a whole era etc, its relationship to the *Last Picture Show* and *'Bye bye Miss American Pie'* etc. but before it is chewed up into pop sociology it's a good idea just to buy and read it"
Miles Donald/New Statesman
£2.50

FICTION

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Dorothy Parker
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THE DEATH OF THE FUHRER
In a sordid garret in the Latin Quarter of Paris a dying Russian doctor told an unbelievable tale which led our hero Karl into the sealed Fuhrerbunker in Berlin, then to a Gothic castle in Spain and finally on a mad mission into the most macabre plot in thriller-writer history
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